July 19, 1949

The Reporter

A fortnightly of facts and ideas

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The Theme

All over the world and throughout recorded history, the argument as to how man can best produce, distribute, and enjoy the sustenance he draws from the earth has never been concluded. On solving the "problem of the farm," on deciding whether the farmer should be left alone, or regulated and subsidized, or coerced into *kolkhoz* and *sovkhoz*, depends the nation's health and economic vitality. *The Reporter* is an anti-"digest" magazine; we present, therefore, no capsule report, but rather a broad review of the debate as it stands in our country today.

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Editorial

The Case of Our Kulaks

The farmer is at it again—or isn't it rather that the politician is once more courting the farmer's favors? The farmer looks for special dispensations from the laws of the market, backed by government guarantees of steady real income; the politician is busy interpreting, in his own partisan way, what he thinks the farmer's needs are. The farmer wants security and the politician wants votes.

There is nothing shocking or unpatriotic in looking for income security. This is a democracy: The cult of individualism does not mean that the individual is supposed to face the vagaries of economics in forlorn helplessness. Through association with others who feel the pinch of the same pressures and needs, he manages to have the group to which he belongs redress some of the handicaps that the accidents of occupation or of birth have imposed on him. The manufacturers, starting in the early days of the republic, achieved a large measure of protection in the internal market from the competition of foreign products. Why shouldn't the trade unions have struggled to give to the workers a bargaining power equal to that of their employers?

The history of democracy is one of progressively democratized privilege or, if we prefer, of man-made political parities. The manufacturer has long obtained an advantage in the internal market for his products against those imported from abroad—a parity with an edge in his favor; the trade unions have put the worker in a condition of parity with management around the collective-bargaining table. And why not the farmers? The chain reaction of man-made parities and of democratized privileges proceeds from one economic group to another, provided, of course, that each group has its claims backed by strong internal organization and by voting power.

This is one of the facts of democratic life and there are no reasons to be squeamish about it. Nor are there valid reasons for using different criteria in judging the demands of each new group strong enough to advance its own "me too" claim. The Congressmen from the dairy states who crusade against oleomargarine and at the same time loathe Petrillo do not stand on very solid ground, for canned music is to live music as oleomargarine is to butter.

The price for political parities is government intervention, and government means, in our system, elected officials or public employees who keep an eye on the past and future election returns. It means politicians, and again there is no reason to squirm whenever we see politicians scurrying around and offering bigger and better parity schemes to farmers or to any other group whose votes count. Politicians are in the brokerage business: They offer their own partisan answer to the demands of any strongly organized group and manage to conciliate or link these demands to the interests of other groups, whose votes are equally desirable. Log-rolling allows the combination of interests and the sharing by the nation as a whole of the costs that the special privileges or the special parity granted to one group demand.

The progressive democratization of privilege is largely due to the politicians. Manufacturers and their descendants could have kept forever the monopoly of governmental protection, had it not happened that at a certain time in our history first the farm and then the labor vote became alluring. In their unquenchable thirst for votes, the politicians offer their assistance to ever-broadening categories of citizens. In so doing, they may come to serve the cause of social justice, as is the case now when the object of their care is not only represented by management

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and farmers and labor but also by all the citizens, men and women, who are exposed to the threat of sickness and likely to get old.

In a democracy, the economic groups that feel aggrieved and have adequate voting power struggle to get from the consumers and the taxpayers a share of what may be called the nation's surplus profit. And where in our country is the group so pure and unselfish as to behold the mote in the farmer's eye?

The real point of the matter is: What is the cost of each parity for the nation as a whole? Which price support and which type of parity should the farmers have? It is the point that marks the difference between acknowledging the facts of democratic life and deciding what we can do with them. The decision must be in terms of national policy, with a clear understanding that the vital interests of the nation cannot be found out by using an adding machine and summing up all the special interests that have received the benefit of the politicians' endorsement. Wise political decisions must be respectful of the facts and determined to make a dent on them. Specifically, from the incontrovertible facts represented by the "me too" trend and the now long tradition of political parities, we must derive an understanding of the farmer's case. But even this understanding will remain only a half-knowledge unless we can add to it some criteria that may make us decide which farm law is best for the nation and for the farmers themselves.

The Reporter does not think it is its function to sponsor a farm bill. Our readers can make up their own minds between the Aiken and Brannan Plans or reserve their judgment until the full debate in Congress. But no matter whether they make up their own minds now or later, they must have prepared minds. To this preparation we try to contribute by indicating some of the conditions that a farm law must satisfy if it is to be part of a national policy and not just a form of vote-grabbing.

1. The farm law must be, first of all, aimed at improving the situation of our *kulaks*—but not of our *kulaks* alone. It is not due to the farmers in the great Midwestern region around Des Moines that the per-capita farm income is $909 as compared to the $1,569 for the nonfarm population. The education and the rehabilitation of the poor farmers of the South, Negro and white, is, to understate the case, as pressing a need as the passage of the civil-rights legislation. It is true that most of the Negro farmers have no vote; yet sometimes statesmen have to reach goals that go beyond the politicians' vision.

2. The subsidies should give the farmer a chance to grow into a better, more skillful producer, up to date on the latest technological improvements. The Russian Communists removed the farmer from the shocks of the world market by removing him from the farm. We, on the contrary, cannot leave the farmer so completely taken by the cares of his own acreage—plus the endorsement of government checks—as to have little interest in and little influence on the broad agricultural and

social problems that go beyond the range of his own fence.

3. The whole of the nonrural community may accept not only as a fact of democratic life but also as a just debt the obligation to pay an inflated food bill, plus about ten per cent in the form of farm subsidies. In all ways and as much as we can, we want to protect the individual from being tossed around by economic forces against which, alone, he has no defense: and so we have unemployment insurance, and terminal leave for homecoming soldiers, and farm subsidies. Subsidies should cushion the farmer against the shocks of sudden price falls and give him time to change crops according to the demands of the market without being stampeded by the market. But to cushion shocks does not mean to encourage stillness.

In judging any proposal for farm legislation, we should see: (a) what is the proportion between the actual result of the farmer's labor and what might be called the surplus income that he receives from the nation via the government; (b) whether the farmer is actually stimulated to improve his technology and to enter into cooperative association or collaboration of any sort with other farmers and producers; (c) whether, and to what an extent, room is left to him and to the organization that he can form to exert some measure of control over the conditions of the market and of his own life. For in the long run, the indulgences from the market must turn out to have been actually earned, as if the farmer had received a credit and not a gift—earned through his work and not only through the wise use of his vote.

We now have these two plans of farm subsidy to judge—untried plans and of a still undetermined cost. We here can examine their features, their apparent motives, the techniques by which they are promoted, the reactions they have aroused among those who are supposed to be the ultimate beneficiaries of farm legislation. The underlying implications reach far into the structure of our national and international order; yet there is still something refreshingly bucolic in these agrarian problems, far removed from the horrid heat of our Communist-anti-Communist conflicts. If we examine these two farm plans, both inspired by a deep concern for the individual, we realize how safe our *kulaks* are from the threat of expropriation.

If there is a danger in these plans, or rather in the trend they represent, it is of an entirely different nature. It is the danger that the great care for the individual and his individual income may lead us close to what could be called kept individualism.

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Democrats in Des Moines

They emphasized rural prosperity, de-emphasized regimentation in a farmer-labor conference to set off the 1950 campaign

Brannan

A lady from Colorado wanted to know how Secretary of Agriculture Brannan would set potato acreage allotments if his new plan for farm price supports became law. "How can farmers who are new in the potato business get fair allotments?" she asked.

She didn't say so, but every farmer at the Democratic conference on agricultural policy in Des Moines last month knew she was worrying about some newly-irrigated land in her state opened up to potato production. She might have been fretting over new cotton fields in California or new hog farms in Louisiana. Behind her question was this one:

"Would a government crop-and-livestock-control program freeze agriculture in its present pattern? Would it inhibit shifts in farm production that come with changes in markets and in the science of agriculture?"

The answer, of course, is that it would. Acreage allotments have to be based on crop history, Secretary Brannan replied, because "no better way of arriving at allotments has been found." Naturally, he said, the government has, in making allotments, to "protect the established farmers," which means reducing acreage on new farms first.

Secretary Brannan could have told the lady from Colorado the story of tobacco—on which acreage controls and marketing quotas have been in effect nearly every year since the first AAA in 1933. Even if development of new tobacco varieties or methods of culture had made possible cheaper production of tobacco in Iowa or Nebraska in the last sixteen years, it would have been very difficult for farmers in those states to get into production. Tobacco is today grown on virtually the same farms which got acreage allotments in 1933. With acreage control in effect, the established producer gets the breaks.

Few people at the Des Moines conference expected to debate questions like the one asked by the national committeewoman from Colorado. Brannan kept inviting criticism of his plan; he said he didn't think it was perfect. But the greenest delegate should have been able to see that the conference was a sales meeting, not a forum.

The Democrats came to Des Moines to launch the 1950 campaign for seats in Congress. The main issue of the campaign was laid out plainly—price supports; so was the argument—that the Democrats are better friends of the farmer than the Republicans. That explains why Des Moines was the site; why Brannan was the star performer; why President Truman himself almost showed up, and why Vice-President Barkley did; and why the meeting was engineered by the national committee and not merely by local Democrats.

President Truman believes that his campaign last fall began to click only after he made his speech at the national plowing match at Dexter, Iowa. The election results showed that farmers' votes in the normally Republican states of the Midwest made the margin. Of all his Cabinet members, Brannan seemed to have put in the most vigorous and successful campaigning. The explanation for the President's success in the farm belt was apparently that farmers had no faith in the Hope-Aiken Act, passed in June, 1948.

This Act was, of course, as bipartisan a piece of domestic legislation as ever has been passed in Congress. The Eightieth Congress did, it is true, enact it on the eve of the Republican National Convention so that the Republicans could claim to have done something for the farmer. Yet, practically all the provisions of the law had considerable Democratic backing, and both Brannan and former Secretary Clinton Anderson, now Senator from New Mexico, had given Aiken and Hope their blessing.

The Hope-Aiken law provided for a one-year extension of wartime farm price supports—except that there was

Joseph D. Keenan (AFL) *A. F. Whitney (Railway Trainmen)* *Jack Kroll (CIO-PAC)*

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provision for adjusting the prices of some commodities, notably potatoes, downward in 1949. (Brannan has lowered potato-price supports by one-third this year under that provision.) Beginning in 1950 supports on "basic" commodities—corn, wheat, cotton, rice, tobacco, and peanuts—were to become flexible from 60 to 90 per cent of parity depending upon the supply.

The "Republican" farm-price law goes considerably farther than any prewar New Deal legislation. In general it makes price supports *possible* on practically any farm commodity—when the Secretary deems it necessary—so long as the price guarantee does not exceed 90 per cent of parity. It does not prevent the announcement of a "forward price" by the Secretary to guide production of some commodities. For example, if the Secretary sees a big corn crop coming on and wants to encourage large hog production to convert corn to pork, he is privileged, according to Aiken, to announce a hog-price support eighteen or more months in advance.

The law provides for acreage controls, if needed to hold supplies in check, and for marketing quotas, if two-thirds of the farmers producing a crop vote for them.

It also calls for making direct money payments to farmers in place of supporting prices in the market place. That is, the government could allow hog prices to drop to the supply-and-demand level, then pay farmers the difference between that level and the guarantee. This provision, like the flexible supports, does not go into effect until January 1, 1950. Though price supports on perishable products may be dropped below wartime levels, they *need not be,* provided Congress furnishes enough money. Even the flexible formula for basic crops is much higher than any price support before the war.

President Truman signed the Hope-Aiken Act a year ago without stating any reservations.

Now he and Brannan have decided that the Hope-Aiken law isn't so good after all. The election convinced them of this. So they are promising the farmers something better—the Brannan Plan.

Some time before Brannan, who is a forty-four-year-old Colorado lawyer, got his present job, he headed up a Department of Agriculture study committee which drew up recommendations for a long-range governmental farm program. Many of the proposals made to Congress by this committee bear a striking resemblance to features in the Hope-Aiken law, now rated as "inadequate" by Brannan and the Democratic Administration. At the time, Brannan believed, as did the Republican Congress, that price supports should not remain fixed at altitudes that would pile up surpluses, and that the price formula should change according to changes in consumer preferences and production costs.

Brannan has altered his views. His plan provides a much higher, and less flexible, level of price support than has ever before been advocated by any responsible agricultural leader. Prices in 1950, for example, would be guaranteed at higher figures than the 90-per-cent-of-parity figures for July, 1949. Under the old parity formula, price supports could come down when the prices of things farmers buy came down. Under the Brannan system, sup-

An Act and a Plan

Aiken	*Brannan*
1 The parity formula for most farm products is based on the ratio, from 1910 to 1914, between the prices of farm products and the products farmers bought.	1 The plan is based on keeping national farm income up to the most recent ten-year moving average.
2 Support at 60 to 90 per cent for six "basic" commodities: corn, wheat, cotton, rice, tobacco, and peanuts.	2 Support of ten commodities—whole milk, eggs, poultry, wheat, corn, cotton, tobacco, meat animals, fruits, and vegetables—at prices averaging about 106 per cent of the old parity.
3 Flexible support levels ranging from 60 to 90 per cent of parity, depending on amount of production. If supply is normal, minimum support will be 75 per cent of parity. As supply increases to 130 per cent of normal, support decreases to 60 per cent, and as supply decreases to 70 per cent of normal, support increases to 90 per cent of parity.	3 Income support at ten-year moving average. From 1939 to 1948, farm income averaged $18.2 billion. Today prices are 1.44 times what they were during that period. So, multiply $18.2 billion by 1.44, and $26.2 billion is in the income-support standard for 1950.
4 The Aiken Act carries forward the specifications of the AAA of 1938 regarding limits of aid.	4 This plan will help farmers only up to 1,800 production units (roughly a gross crop value of $25,000) per farm.
5 Any or all of these controls *may* be applied: acreage allotments, marketing quotas, and marketing agreements.	5 Same.
6 Soil conservation is not tied in with support program.	6 Soil conservation is tied in with support program.
7 Cost—?	7 Cost—?

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ports are based on a ten-year average of prices. In any year, therefore, the level of price support could change very little, since one year is added to the ten-year average at one end and another year taken off at the other end, while the average for the nine remaining years, of course, does not change. Moreover, soon after the Brannan price supports went into effect, the ten-year average itself would include the effect of the government guarantees.

In his proposals to Congress, Brannan has made a big talking point of direct payments. For all perishable products he wants to let market prices seek their own level and pay farmers the difference between that level and the government guarantee in cash. This has an obvious appeal to labor, because it permits food prices to drop as low as they would in a free market. Whether it has the same appeal to farmers remains to be seen.

The largest farm organizations, the Farm Bureau and the Grange, never have been favorable to direct cash payments by the government for price equalization.

Secretary Brannan didn't emphasize the direct payments so much in Des Moines. He didn't bother with any of the details of farm programs. He talked in generalities about "maintaining prosperity," about the need for shifting to more livestock production (a popular idea in Iowa, the nation's greatest livestock state), about the great things done for farmers by the Democrats and about the "failure" of the Republicans.

Until this meeting Democratic strategy had been to say little about the Hope-Aiken Act but merely to advocate the Brannan Plan. Now, it appears the Democrats intend to lay into the Republicans for not doing right by the farmer. Brannan said the 1948 Hope-Aiken Act was not studied thoroughly by the House Agriculture Committee; it was merely a hurried series of amendments to the Act of 1938; it was a "me too" program; and it covered only a few commodities.

Again and again throughout the conference Brannan kept coming back to his opponents' charges that his plan would regiment agriculture, which he answers by saying he has asked for no new types of controls not already in the law. This is true, but he has asked for more of the same kind of controls, namely marketing quotas on a long list of products not included in present law. The charge by Aiken and others is not that the Brannan Plan would mean other kinds of controls, but that the government probably would apply the present controls a good deal more rigorously.

At one point, Brannan said: "It has been charged—and this is extremely painful to me—that my purpose is 'political.' " At Brannan's elbow, when he made the remark, was National Chairman McGrath. At the same table sat Edward J. Kelly, former mayor and Democratic boss of Chicago; Jake Arvey, the present Chicago boss; and Jack Kroll, director of the CIO Political Action Committee.

Later in the program, Mrs. India Edwards, director of the Women's Division of the National Committee, showed, by means of a black wool cloth, cut-out figures, and electrified sand particles (a technique in visual education known as "black magic"), how the Brannan Plan's income goal for farmers would assure prosperity for the rest of the nation. She trotted out symbols showing how much money farmers spend for building materials, machinery, fertilizer, gasoline, and clothing.

Mrs. Edwards was not the only speaker to harp on how the Brannan Plan would promote national prosperity. Brannan himself mentioned this more than once.

Vice-President Barkley had another theme: the fact that everything stems from the soil. He made this point in true Southern Senatorial fashion for nearly an hour—and his humor was good, if not his economics. He got his biggest laugh when, discussing the expansion of industrial uses for farm products, he said science had learned how to make four pairs of nylon hose out of a bushel of corncobs. "This is a new use for cobs," he added. "When I was a boy we used cobs to start fires."

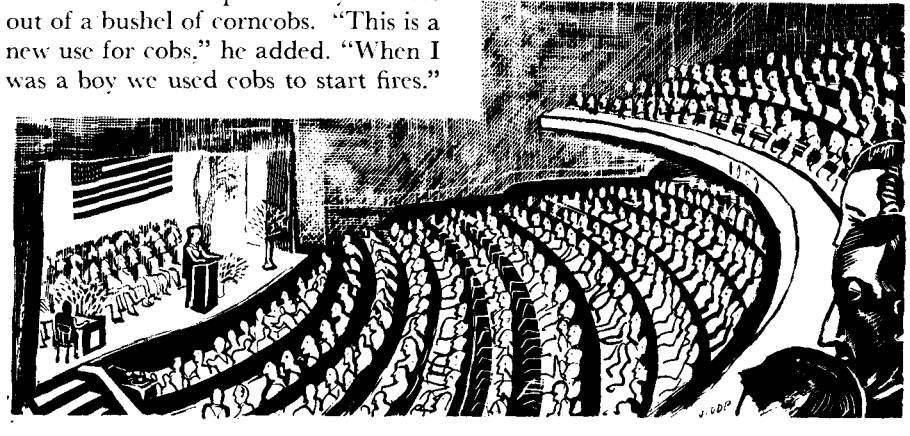
Although the agricultural fundamentalism theme—that sound farms make a sound country—was played hard, Brannan revealed that he was aware of criticism of this phase of his sales argument. At one point he said that a depression which started somewhere else in the economy would not be stopped by his plan. But he did point out that it could help a lot, because most depressions are "farm-led and farm-fed."

The labor leaders present—A. F. Whitney, of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen; Joseph D. Keenan, director of the AFL League for Political Education; James B. Carey, secretary of the CIO, and others—were asked a planted question: "Why is labor interested in this kind of a meeting?"

The answer, with minor variations, was: "Labor recognizes the farmer as an important customer for the products it makes. We believe that only by preserving the income of the farmer can we continue to maintain full employment and keep up our own standard of living."

But the farmer-labor wedding didn't quite come off. Midwestern farmers are not used to labor leaders at their meetings. In the corridors and washrooms some asked why "those guys" were invited. Some farmers wondered if they weren't being sucked in to help the forces of labor fight the Taft-Hartley Act.

There were a number of important labor leaders in attendance, but farm-organization leaders stayed away in large numbers. Several prominent officials of the Farmers Union showed up, but the Farm Bureau, the big farm organization in the Midwest, had no important representative on hand. One Farmers Union man from central



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Iowa said: "It's funny there are so many labor bosses and so few farm leaders at this conference. Looks peculiar to me."

Midwest Democratic chieftains themselves are somewhat skeptical about farmer-labor unity. They are willing to give the effort a good try, but they point out carefully that the idea came from national headquarters. National headquarters clearly believes that it has found the real common denominator in the Brannan Plan. Chairman McGrath put it this way: "We're going to make the farm economy a party issue both on the farm and in the city. That's why labor is represented here."

But a lot remains to be done on the farmer side of this deal before it will succeed, and maybe a good bit more on the city side than McGrath realizes, too.

Ed Kelly of Chicago revealed a few doubts which may lie in other true Democratic hearts as well. He asked Secretary Brannan: "What about the effects of this farm price support plan on other people, that is, in the cities? I mean in taxes. Won't they have to pay for their food that way? What about the effects on other prices? Will it have chaotic effects on other businesses?"

These questions were not difficult for Brannan to pass off with general answers in a friendly setting. But they showed the difficulty in getting farmers and labor union members together on a political program.

Whatever may be said on the skeptical side, the Brannan sales meeting was a resounding, if limited, success. It did pave the way for later, more detailed explanation and qualification of the price-support plan. It did, inevitably, focus attention on some of the common economic problems of labor and farmers. It did bubble over with the enthusiasm of a vigorous, and mostly young, political cadre which is still steamed up over its victory last fall. And there can be no doubt that the Brannan Plan, as presented, showed plenty of political appeal. The Republicans face a difficult job in finding an effective counterattack in their Midwest farm strategy conference which is scheduled to be held this fall, most likely also in Des Moines.

—Lauren Soth

The Farmers Catch Up

Since 1924, they have been protected increasingly against the vagaries of our shifting economy

In 1924, when American farmers were having a hard time in the world market while industry was doing fine, two Republican members of the predominantly G.O.P. Congress came forward with the novel proposal that the government offer the farmer the sort of special protection it had been giving business for more than a century. The McNary-Haugen bill, named for an Oregon Senator and an Iowa Representative, had a relatively uncomplex idea: subsidize farm exports to give the U. S. farmer a world market for his crop surpluses and at the same time keep domestic commodity prices high. President Coolidge vetoed the bill as unconstitutional—thereby probably beating the Supreme Court (of that time) to the draw.

Last month, when President Truman proposed that the government guarantee wheat exports at less than domestic prices, the Senate ratified the International Wheat Agreement in a single afternoon, without even the formality of a record vote.

These contrasting attitudes in some sense measure the full impact upon America and the world of a global depression, a global war, and five successive Democratic Administrations during which popular concepts of the government's role in agriculture and America's role in the world have changed considerably.

The McNary-Haugen bill was born of the anomalous farm depression and industrial prosperity which characterized the "normalcy" of the 1920's. Farmers, selling on a free world market, were losing their shirts. The answer, as McNary and Haugen saw it, was to subsidize exports and keep the domestic price above the world price. The subsidy was to be financed by a tax called an "equalization fee" on domestic sales of farm products. The result would be two prices—one abroad and a higher one at home.

Today, Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan wants a new kind of dual pricing for farm products, one that differs both from the McNary-Haugen plan and the International Wheat Agreement. Brannan wants the farmer to get one price while the consumer pays another, with the govern-

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ment—representing all farmers and all consumers—paying the difference.

Between the McNary-Haugen proposal and the Brannan Plan there have been twenty-five years of efforts by government to keep the farmer in his proper place in the economy. All of these efforts, from the early New Deal until Brannan unveiled his scheme this spring, were based on the parity concept. But each has been more complicated than the last, because the objectives of the planners have broadened. In the beginning, the object was simply to prevent acute economic distress on farms. The law of supply and demand was invoked with a vengeance; there was the killing of the little pigs and the plowing under of cotton. Accompanying this bare objective of higher prices was the mass of other New Deal farm legislation attacking the problems of soil conservation, farm credit, farm tenancy, rural electrification, and new uses for farm products. And while the little pigs were being slaughtered and the cotton plowed under, research continued to increase farm efficiency.

By the late 1930's, a new kind of two-price system was in operation—the food-stamp plan that subsidized consumption of certain farm products by low-income families. The school lunch program, now on a permanent basis, is a timid move in the same direction. In both cases, humanitarian concern is subordinated to the hard dollars-and-cents concern for more farm markets.

Meanwhile, farm economists have tried to wrap up as many of these social-economic objectives as possible in a single price-support plan. The idea is not only to protect the farmer from catastrophe, but also to close the gap between rural and urban income, remake the pattern of American agriculture, improve the American diet, and build up the national soil resources. As the objectives have broadened, the effort to achieve them all in a single package has resulted in plans of increasing complexity, threatening to make a slide rule and a calculating machine as standard a part of farm equipment as a tractor.

Until the war, support was generally limited to the "basic" commodities, legally defined as cotton, wheat, corn, tobacco, rice, and peanuts (marketed for nuts, as distinguished from peanuts marketed for oil). And even for these favored products support was generally at levels of between 52 and 75 per cent of parity.

Under the present law, support of these and several other specified commodities is at 90 per cent of parity. The Aiken law (Title II of the so-called Hope-Aiken Act), scheduled to be effective next year, continues the distinction between basic and nonbasic commodities and provides support up to 90 per cent. The Brannan Plan establishes a new formula, called the "price-support standard," without distinction between commodities, though it does set forth a list of priorities.

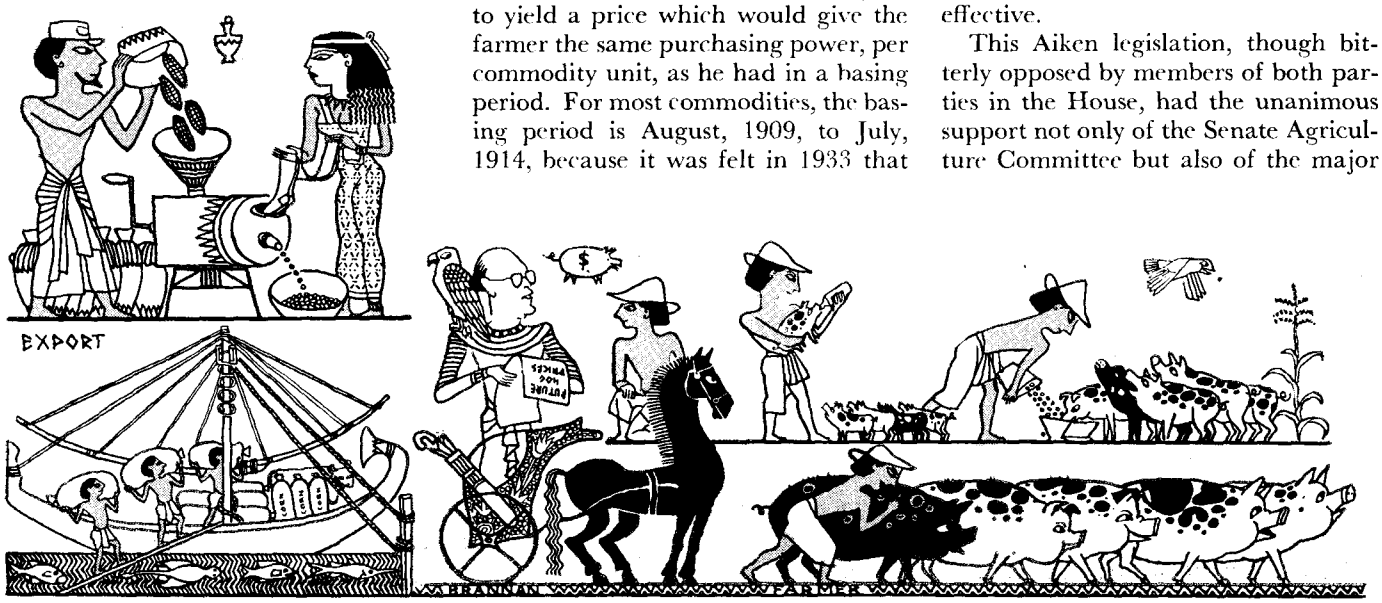
The parity formula, as it was written in 1933 and as it remains, is designed to yield a price which would give the farmer the same purchasing power, per commodity unit, as he had in a basing period. For most commodities, the basing period is August, 1909, to July, 1914, because it was felt in 1933 that farm and industrial prices were most nearly in balance during those years.

Almost everybody agrees that this formula has a good many things wrong with it, the chief one being that it is hopelessly out of date. Mechanization of wheat farming has cut unit costs of production so much that a wheat farmer can make a handsome profit if wheat is supported at 90 per cent of parity. By contrast, dairying costs have gone up; 90 per cent of parity is barely the break-even point. Oranges were a luxury foodstuff in 1910; today they are a standard part of the national diet; but officially the economics of orange production are still based on 1909-1914.

The present farm program is a continuation in most respects of the wartime legislation embodied in the Steagall amendment to the Price Control Act of 1942. This amendment boosted support to 90 per cent of parity for the basic commodities (92.5 for cotton), and for any others for which the Secretary of Agriculture requested an expansion of production during the war. This second group, known as the "Steagall commodities," includes hogs, eggs, chickens (with certain exceptions), turkeys, milk, butter-fat, certain varieties of dry peas and dry edible beans, soybeans for oil, peanuts for oil, flaxseed for oil, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and American-Egyptian cotton.

Under its own terms, the Steagall amendment was due to expire December 31, 1948. In June of that year, Congress extended it for twelve months, but provided that on January 1, 1950, a permanent, long-range program fathered by Senator Aiken would become effective.

This Aiken legislation, though bitterly opposed by members of both parties in the House, had the unanimous support not only of the Senate Agriculture Committee but also of the major



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farm organizations. It was even given a pat on the back, at least by inference, by President Truman.

The arithmetic of the Aiken Act is rigged so that a number of things (it is hoped) will happen. Parity is modernized to bring the relationships between commodities back into line with reality. As a group, the grains generally have lower parities, while livestock and poultry products have higher parities. This will make it so profitable to feed grain to animals that meat, dairy, and poultry production will increase while grain production decreases. Land planted to wheat and corn during the wartime food emergency will revert to pasture.

The Aiken arithmetic has another feature designed to preserve flexible commodity relationships. As the supply of a commodity goes up in relation to demand, the level of support drops, so that farmers will have an incentive to switch production to some commodity for which there is a greater demand, a better market.

The language of the Aiken Act makes it plain, however, that the arithmetic can be flexible, too. Specific support figures in relation to supply are spelled out only for the basic commodities. For the nonbasics, the Secretary of Agriculture is given discretion to set any support level up to 90 per cent of parity. He can, in an emergency, boost the support for the basics to 90 per cent.

But the law limits the money he can use to support perishables to that available from Section 32 funds and the Commodity Credit Corporation's postwar reserve. Section 32 funds, which amount to $50-$60 million a year, are a permanent appropriation of 30 per cent of customs receipts. The appropriation is provided by Section 32 of the AAA Act for encouraging the use of farm products. The CCC's postwar reserve, originally made up of a wartime appropriation of $500 million, now amounts to $188 million.

As a substitute for the Aiken Act, Secretary Brannan urges one which would create the illusion of junking the whole parity concept so far as prices are concerned, substituting the phrase "parity of income"—the same rose by another name. The idea is to support prices at a level calculated to provide the same standard of living that the farmer has had, at an average, over the most recent ten years.

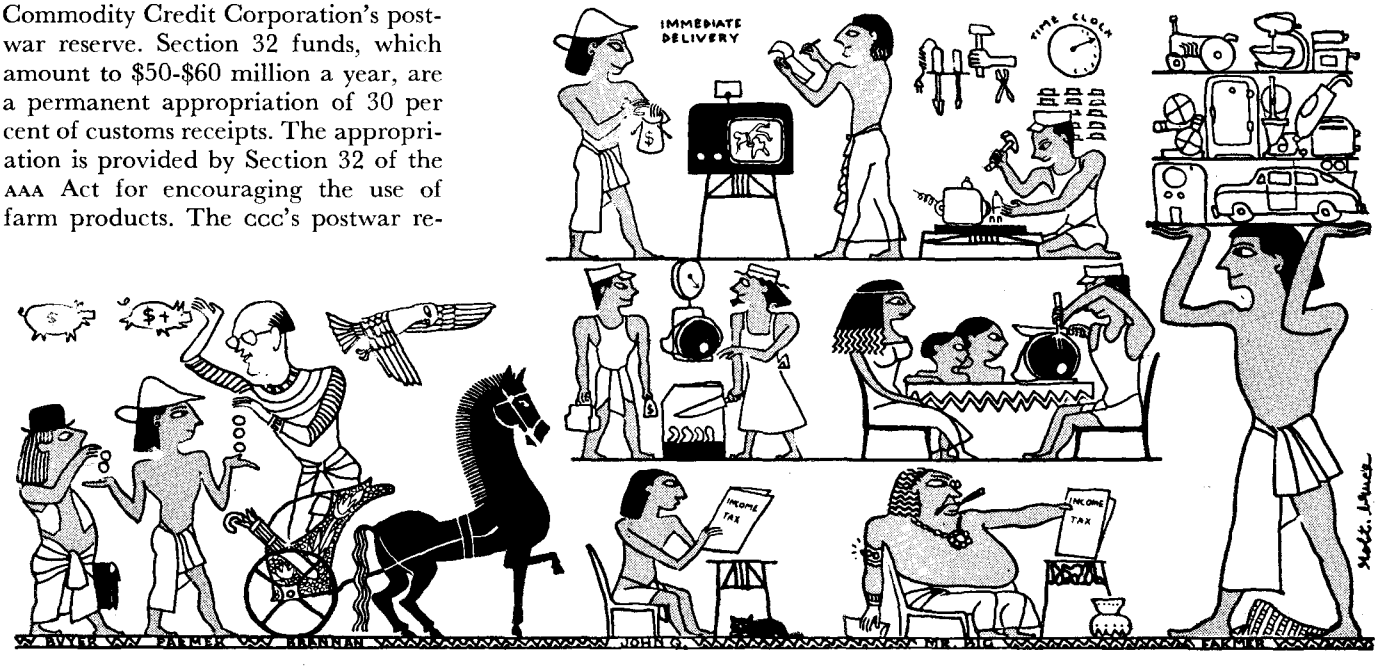
The Brannan method of calculating individual commodity-price supports assumes that farm production will be the same, that the farmer will sell the same amount of wheat, or hogs, or asparagus. Because production, over the long run, is going up, Agriculture Department economists expect that Brannan's method of computing support prices would usually result in higher farm income than the minimum standard that the plan calls for.

In practice, the price-support standards as calculated by the Brannan formulas are not substantially different from the parity prices as calculated by the Aiken formula. Brannan's support prices, at the new price-support standard, would average something like 106 per cent of parity; Aiken would support prices at 60 to 90 per cent of parity.

Brannan's plan goes further than Aiken's in tying broad social and economic objectives to the naked question of farm prices. In its provision for direct payments to farmers to hold down consumer prices, the Brannan Plan does not differ in principle from the Aiken Act. But in presenting his plan Brannan emphasized the effect on consumer prices, and Aiken didn't. Aiken also limited the funds which would be made available to support perishables. Brannan, on the other hand, particularly emphasized supports for perishables, which account for 75 per cent of farm income.

This is where farm politics collides with farm economics. That the peanut, which accounts for less than one per cent of all farm income, has legal status as a basic commodity is due entirely to the vigor with which Representative Stephen Pace has represented his peanut-growing constituents of the 3rd district of Georgia.

If precedent is any guide, it is probable that domestic and even regional politics will play a major role in shaping a long-term policy the ultimate success of which, regardless of other considerations, would depend upon the maintenance of a steady world market for U. S. farm surpluses, and upon the ability of the whole U.S. economy, keystone of the western world's economy, to absorb the costs of a farm price support program that bids fair to be at least costlier than any that has as yet been devised.



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Farmers: Pro and Contra

The two men interviewed on these pages are not represented as average farmers (an average farmer is impossible to find); their remarks do indicate the wide divergence of views on the Brannan Plan, even in the State of Louisiana.

For: Cajun Smallholder

Fifty-six miles by highway, north and east of Jeanerette, Louisiana, is a little farm trading center, Opelousas (pop. 8,980), seat of St. Landry Parish. The people who live in it are thrifty Cajuns. Surrounding the parish seat are farms of varying sizes. Many of them are small, like the one of 186 acres owned by Preston J. Wyble.

Wyble, who is fifty-two, is keenly aware of, and has often tried to do something about, the problems of the small farmer. Three times he has tried to organize local co-operatives in his and his fellow farmers' behalf—a cotton-oil mill, a cotton gin, a vegetable-processing plant—but each one, he explains, failed because it was crowded out by the big interests.

Wyble is shrewd, cautious, industrious, and a little suspicious. His lineage is French, Irish, and Indian. He is round, potbellied, and somewhat bald; his large, blue-gray eyes are penetrating as he glares when making a point. At times he speaks in flowing sentences with the eagerness of a politically-minded Frenchman or Irishman; other times he grunts like an Indian.

The farm Wyble now owns differs greatly from the usual Southern row-crop plantations. Instead of expanses of acreage planted solidly with cotton, corn, or cane he has rather small fenced-off areas for hogs and cattle, hay, clover, and pecans. Part of the farm is set apart for raising the things his family of wife and four children need at home. Wyble is engaged in a kind of subsistence-plus-small-cash-crop farming.

"Farmers never had enough protection as long as I can remember, and that goes a good way back," says Preston Wyble. "The only way they're ever going to get it is from the government. Everyone else has it. Just look at the way special groups in the country are subsidized. Where would the airlines be without the airmail contracts? Or even the manufacturers without tariffs, or the bankers without the guarantees the government gives them?"

The government, he says, has actually been subsidizing the farmer directly since 1933 through the Agricultural Adjustment Act and the farm security and other programs, but he doubts whether those plans really gave the farmer all the protection he needs. He is not sure that even the Brannan Plan goes far enough.

"You think about the farmer a minute," Wyble says. "He's the only man in the country who hasn't any say in the price of the things he sells or buys. Others can bargain. The farmer can't. He sells at the other fellow's price and buys at the other fellow's price. The Brannan program, as an outside third party, helps the farmer at least to get a decent selling price."

In Wyble's opinion, the plan would increase production and lead to a more enterprising attitude among the small farmers in particular. If the plan is adopted, he feels that the small farmer could be sure that his year's investment and labor would be rewarded.

Wyble believes, however, that the best assurance that farmers have for protection comes from themselves. Therefore, he hopes that any committee system which may be set up to carry out the Brannan program will afford the farmers—by which he means *small* farmers—effective representation through an election.

"Naturally," he submits, "the larger farmer may be opposed to the plan. On the face of it, the plan tends to favor the small farmer. But it is the small farmer who needs it most to stabilize his living. The large farmer who is really operating a profit-making factory in the fields has always been able to take care of himself. Of course, there are always exceptions."

The small farmer, he insists, "isn't asking for something that other groups haven't had for a long time. He is just late in asking for it. The wool has been pulled over his eyes so long that, like Rip Van Winkle, he's now waking up to what he's been missing.

"This plan is a good thing for the entire economy of the country. When the farmer gets his fair share he can buy more goods from the factories and shops in the cities. Everyone prospers when the farmer has money to spend.

"It will help in many ways. You won't see so many small farmers trying to shoot up into big ones the way they did twenty years ago. Under the plan, they'll be able to make a good living

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on the family-sized farm. They'll be happy to remain small and work hard, adding, each in his degree, to the great food production of the country."

Wyble and his family use as many mechanical implements as they can afford. They have a tractor and eventually hope to buy a harvester. Meanwhile, they employ day laborers to assist them at harvest time with the pecans and the hay. With provisions like those outlined in the Brannan Plan, Farmer Wyble thinks he can have enough assured income shortly to add the mechanical harvester and other devices that can make him an even better farmer. "And that's true," he insists, "of any intelligent small farmer anywhere in the country."

Against: Sugar Planter

Bayou Têche, the bayou that Longfellow's Evangeline cruised down, flows quietly through the sugar-cane belt of south central Louisiana. Sugar plantations line its banks for miles. The pattern of marshland and cane fields is broken only by the colonial mansions of the planters.

Just east of the town of Jeanerette, the bayou cuts through the historic Delgado Albania Plantation, a 2,200-acre tract which has produced sugar since Spanish colonial days.

Stephen C. Munson, who manages the establishment, comes from a family that has produced sugar for almost as long as the Delgado property has. His ancestors built Elm Hall, in the parish of Lafourche, one of Louisiana's landmarks. This Munson has raised sugar for almost forty years. He was an independent planter until the depression; he has managed the million-dollar Delgado enterprise since 1932.

For ten years, Munson was president of St. Mary's Parish Farm Bureau Federation, and he is still active in the Farm Bureau and the American Sugar Cane League. He is flatly opposed to the Brannan Plan.

"It's nothing but socialism," Munson told me. "You give the farmer a guarantee of a minimum scale of living, you give him protection—and you ruin his incentive. You kill the American profit motive."

Munson starts from the unstartling belief that any farm plan or program of farm subsidies must insure a healthy economy for the United States. "If the farmer can't buy manufactured goods," he said, "the economy may as well fold." So far, he agrees with Secretary Brannan and almost everybody else. But then, he says, the farmer wants, and should get, parity in the marketplace and a fair return for his labor. This is the only way that he can pay for the things he must purchase and keep the economy healthy. Under any fair plan, the farmers themselves vote on controls. The Brannan program does away with this basic framework.

"The Brannan program is all for the small farmer," he went on. "It protects him but it would not protect the large farmers against great losses. It would probably drive them out of business. And it is the large farmers, you will remember, who are responsible for the bountiful production in this country."

The Secretary's plan, Munson says, "would, by its limitation on the number of units and the amount of money that could be paid as a subsidy, tend to make farmers remain small. The proposed limit of $25,000 for subsidies, as I understand it, wouldn't cover a third of what is now paid to some large farmers under the present voluntary program. Some of us would go broke or have to divide our lands into smaller parcels if that became operative."

"Would breaking up the larger farms affect farm output?" I asked.

"It certainly would," he snapped. "Breaking up the big farms would raise your costs and cut down your efficiency. And if you try to work the little farms collectively, well, then you've got what they've got in Russia."

Munson leaned back in his swivel chair and, in the drawl that is inescapable in Louisiana, continued: "See here, we've got good legislation, the Aiken bill. It should be tried out at least. It has a range of 90 per cent down to 60 per cent, which certainly ought to bring production in line with consumption. You put that Brannan Plan over, and we'd get a leveling off that could ruin us. Production costs would shoot to the sky."

Asked whether he was familiar with all the details of the Secretary's proposal, Munson was able to reply without hesitation: "I don't have to know all of it. What I know is enough. It's just no good.

"The Sugar Cane League has taken a strong stand, and we've notified our Louisiana delegation in Washington

about it. We're taking the position that the sugar industry is operating under the Sugar Act of 1948, which has four more years to run; and we don't intend to suggest that any change be made in that legislation now."

Munson continually emphasized the point that only large farms can meet the demand for abundant food production. "The food we put into the mouths of the European people who need more than idealism to fight Communism comes principally from the large farms. The big fellow needs plenty of cash to operate. And he won't be able to get it if the Brannan program goes through."

In Munson's view, the order of farming as he has known it has to be retained, even though he admits that sugar may be in for hard times. The Delgado Plantation has lost money for the last two years because of the low sucrose content of the cane. Only twelve hundred acres are in active cultivation—eight hundred in sugar and the rest in beans and corn. Other planters in the neighboring area are alternating the cane sugar crop with rice.

"We farmers are individualists," Munson said. "We want to plant our crops the way we believe best and don't like any interference of any kind. The only controls we want are those we vote ourselves. Anything more than that is socialism. The small fellow may want that. Not me."—Arthur W. Hepner

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Aiken, Brannan, and Hope

The big three of farm planning agree on parity and subsidies, but they have grave differences about how much and for whom

"The choice is between high rigid supports with government controls, and more moderate supports with freedom of action for the farmer." So says Senator George D. Aiken of Vermont, the ranking Republican on the Senate Agriculture Committee and the author of the farm law which will become effective in 1950 if no new legislation supplants it.

"It's very unfair to say my plan means more controls. Farmers have to have controls to get even 72 per cent of parity under Aiken's scheme." So says Secretary of Agriculture Charles F. Brannan, author of the farm plan which the House Agriculture Committee recently voted be given a trial run on three commodities.

"Aiken's prices are too low from the farmer's standpoint. Brannan's are too high from the standpoint of being able to carry the operation." So says Representative Clifford R. Hope of Kansas, the ranking Republican on the House Agriculture Committee.

Here, in miniature, is the dilemma, or trilemma, confronting the Washington farm bloc. It is a political axiom that the farm bloc can get anything it wants, but right now it has no clear or unanimous idea of what it wants. The leading G.O.P. critics of the Brannan Plan are in as much disagreement with each other as they are with Brannan.

Aiken has twice been elected Governor and twice Senator by the dairy farmers of Vermont. He would just as soon vote with the Administration as not, and he frequently does. He has no quarrel with the proposal to subsidize farmers directly while allowing farm prices to find their own levels in the market place. The same authority is in his own law, though on a more limited scale.

Hope has twelve times been elected to the House by the wheat farmers of southwestern Kansas. A more consistent party man than Aiken, he is one of the most serious and best-informed students of the farm problem in the Eighty-first Congress.

He can't understand the rush to pass a long-range farm program. The postwar agricultural readjustment is just now taking place, he argues. Better extend the present law, which was designed to take care of just such a situation and which he had a large hand in writing, he says, "until we can see where we are going."

Hope does quarrel with the Brannan subsidy plan for highly practical reasons: It makes the farmer wholly dependent upon Congressional appropriations and vulnerable to the economy waves which come over Congress from time to time. "If you ever get prices down, it's hard to get them up again," Hope says. "The Brannan Plan means getting away from the idea that parity prices are fair. Brannan implies that they are not fair to the consumer, and this admission jeopardizes the whole program of parity prices."

Aiken, Hope, and Brannan all agree that nobody knows what the Brannan Plan, Aiken Act, or any other plan is going to cost. As Aiken puts it, "It's going to cost something under any plan. To be sure of enough, you are bound to have surpluses." Brannan adds that if Congress approves his plan, he will not ask for an increase in the funds already available to the Commodity Credit Corporation for supporting the prices of farm products.

Aiken and Hope agree that Brannan's support prices are too high, though even on this point they have different reasons. Hope doesn't think they are too high in theory, but he is "somewhat concerned" over the practical matter of getting enough money out of Congress every year to pay the bill.

Aiken is concerned because he thinks the Brannan Plan, with its new "price-support standard," would have to be accompanied by acreage controls and all the rest of the machinery of regimentation.

But Hope and Brannan both charge that Aiken's program requires controls. "The Aiken Act," says Hope, "has been sold to the country as a proposal which would reduce controls, but actually it increases controls because it covers more commodities." He stresses the fact that by providing higher supports when controls are in effect, the Act gives farmers a positive incentive to vote for controls.

Hope also sides with Brannan on another point of criticism which Aiken makes. As a condition of price support, Brannan would require farmers to carry out certain minimum soil-conservation practices. But, says Aiken, "there are an awful lot of poor people

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who couldn't afford it. Not very many farmers abuse the soil because they want to."

"Oh, I know it's control and regimentation and all that," Hope says, "but after all I don't think there's anything particularly atrocious about tying in soil conservation with price support. If there's any national interest in soil conservation, that's one way to carry it out."

Aiken also disagrees with Brannan's provision prescribing a limit to the produce from any one farm that can receive price supports. This, he says, would "slow down the shift to the more economic producing areas." For example, potatoes are grown more efficiently in Maine than in North Carolina. But most of the Maine production is on big farms which would be over the limit, whereas most North Carolina potatoes are grown on small farms within the limit. The result, according to Senator Aiken, would be that fewer potatoes would be grown in Maine where they should be grown, more in North Carolina where they shouldn't be.

Brannan says this doesn't necessarily follow. "I knew I would get beat over the head with this income-limit proposal. But the statutes are full of policy declarations by Congress in favor of the family-size farm."

Hope doesn't enthusiastically support the income-limitation feature, but he doesn't think it is terribly unfortunate either. He points out that the limit is pretty high to begin with, and big units would probably find some way to break up and thereby get around the provision.

Finally, says Aiken, because the Brannan Plan does not relate support to supply, as does the Aiken Act, it "stabilizes the price for the commodity, but unstabilizes income." This is how: In a good year, with a good support price, a farmer might make a killing and the country would be left with a huge carryover. In a bad year, the Brannan support price would not necessarily change, and the farmer would collect it on a drastically reduced number of commodity units. At the same time, the carryover would come on the market and prevent the law of supply and demand from working in the farmer's favor.

Says Brannan: "What does he want —no carryover at all, or a very small one? I think the consumer is certainly entitled to the protection of a big carryover."

Aiken is a bit wistful as he criticizes the Brannan Plan. A little more than a year ago he was Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Subcommittee writing the law which Aiken now says "with a few amendments may well stand for years to come as the cornerstone in the foundation of American farm prosperity." The subcommittee's work then had the endorsement of Brannan as well as that of President Truman.

At the time, Aiken commented to a reporter that farm policy has long been on a more solid bipartisan basis than even the highly-touted bipartisan foreign policy, and warned, "I'm going to be very mad at anybody who tries to bring it into politics." Then came the 1948 campaign, and Aiken had to get mad at the entire Midwestern farm bloc.

"What does he mean we're political about it?" asks Brannan, who contends he didn't really change his mind about the Aiken Act between 1948 and 1949. "The Aiken plan was the best we could get in 1948. A Republican victory was certain. Charles Brannan was just a guy keeping a chair warm down here for four or five months until a good Republican could move in. We were trying to get a program that would withstand a Republican Administration, and we thought that the Aiken Act could do that."

Brannan's chief objection to the Aiken Act is simply that it doesn't go far enough. He particularly doesn't like its lower support prices. But the real joker, he says, is that it first authorizes production payments, i. e., direct subsidies to farmers, and then limits the money that can be used for them to a preposterously low figure.

Hope's chief objection to the Aiken Act is that "it tries to do too much too soon." Hope also feels that the Aiken law has no adequate provision for forward pricing, though it is based on the theory that price determines production. And Hope and Brannan agree that although the end result of a lower price may be less production, the immediate result is more, as the farmer tries to make up for his losses.

When he talks about his own formula Brannan takes visitors into a small room adjoining his office. It contains only a small, plain conference table, a few chairs, and in one corner a blackboard about three by five feet completely covered with a set of figures awesome enough to be the formula for the atomic bomb.

"This is the first time you've ever seen a whole farm-price formula on one blackboard," says Brannan proudly.

"It's true that this formula covers the highest years in history. It's also true that when the low years of 1939 and 1940 are lopped off, it will be higher than it is now. But the index of prices paid by farmers is the important thing. If industrial prices go down, then this formula will go down. This thing isn't designed to last from now until the millenium. Three or four or five years from now, I hope that whoever has my job and whoever is working in the Department of Agriculture will be able to come up with a better plan.

"If we run into trouble with this one, we can change it. This isn't a proposal for a 'privileged income class.' The farmer's still behind the rest of the population in income. Last year farm people had an average net income of $909, including the value of home-produced, home-consumed food and what they earned off the farm. The average income of other people was $1,569. Even my plan would let farm income go down another 15 per cent. But if anybody's going to advocate privileges for the farmer, it ought to be me, oughtn't it?

"That's my job, isn't it?"

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A Vote in Favor

An economist comes out for the Brannan Plan in principle, but not without reservations about some specific provisions

In farm legislation in the United States the important issues, which are rarely numerous, have a way of being buried under a heavy nursecrop of legislative refinement and administrative gadgetry. This is true of Secretary Brannan's new farm program. There are only two issues of prime importance—first, the new method of insuring farmers a minimum income for what they produce, and, second, the level of the minimum income that is to be guaranteed.

However disguised, the central objective of American farm policy for the last twenty years has been to get the farmer more income than he would get from an unregulated market. The policy is fixed. The American farmer is an important man, politically as well as economically, and he combines an affection for free enterprise with an abhorrence of free markets that goes back to colonial times. The chief concern in formulating farm policy is to find means of increasing farm income.

The most obvious way of getting the farmer more income is to fix him a good price and, through loans or government purchase, take enough of his produce off the market to maintain that price. This method was followed from 1938 on for basic crops (wheat, cotton, corn, tobacco and, by grace of Southern Congressmen, rice and peanuts), and it was formally extended to other products—among them meat, butter-fat, potatoes, and oilseeds—for which the government was asking increased production. Less formal guarantees were offered on still other crops, so, in effect, the policy of price supports was generalized to nearly all agriculture. The wartime price guarantees were generous, and so was the responding production. A demand for food which, after the war, increased to famine urgency, kept prices for most products above the guaranteed level.

The wartime policy could be considered a success, and there is little doubt that farmers liked it. Production could be planned and crops planted with a flat insurance against loss; it was a time of handsome prices and income. The prices, moreover, were paid to the farmer in his accustomed market; he did not have to fill out forms to get the money. It was inevitable that there would be a demand to keep on doing the same thing in peacetime.

It was also evident that what had worked during war, when much of the world's agriculture was either out of production or, more frequently, out of reach, might not work during peace. With peace the ancient surplus of cotton would reappear; the United States would be producing wheat far in excess of its own requirements; a day would come when a hungry world would not take up occasional or possibly chronic surpluses of other crops and products. High and fixed guarantees would stimulate further an endless accumulation. There would be no lower prices to suggest curtailment to farmers or to encourage consumption.

The issue was first joined in the Eightieth Congress, where wheat and cotton Congressmen, both partial to the wartime policy, united behind the Hope bill, which continued the war time supports. The opposition was organized by Senator Aiken of Vermont in support of a compromise. For basic commodities the level of the guaranteed prices would drop from 90 per cent of the old parity (92.5 per cent for cotton) to 75 per cent of a somewhat revised parity, with some special concessions to tobacco.

Agreement did not come easily, and

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none had been reached by the time the regular session of the Eightieth Congress was ready to adjourn so that the Republican members might go to Philadelphia to nominate a candidate for President. It was clearly dangerous to allow the wartime supports to lapse without providing a substitute. With some prompting from convention headquarters, Congress tried again, and toward dawn of the last night's sitting it passed both the Hope and the Aiken bills, the first to run through this year and the second to take effect thereafter.

Although the Hope-Aiken legislation, formally styled the Agricultural Act of 1948, was not a prime issue in the campaign, the weakness of the Republicans in farm territory notably encouraged those who were determined that the Aiken half of the Hope-Aiken Act should never take effect. The Brannan Plan is, first of all, a concession to this opposition. Under it, cotton, wheat, and tobacco farmers, together with corn producers (whose spokesmen have been somewhat less vocal) will get the high support prices they have demanded. The government, by purchase or by making loans to producers to enable them to store their crops, will hold enough of these crops off the market to maintain the guaranteed price. This latter will be somewhat above the wartime guarantees.

Such a policy is at least possible for these "storables," which account for about one-quarter of the value of all farm production. It can lead to the storage of very large supplies, and trouble accumulates with the stored crop. In the end, unless the inventory is liquidated as it was in the early 1940's by the catastrophic demands of war, steps will have to be taken to control production. And this, the experience of the 1930's showed, though it can check expansion of production of a crop, is not very effective in its curtailment.

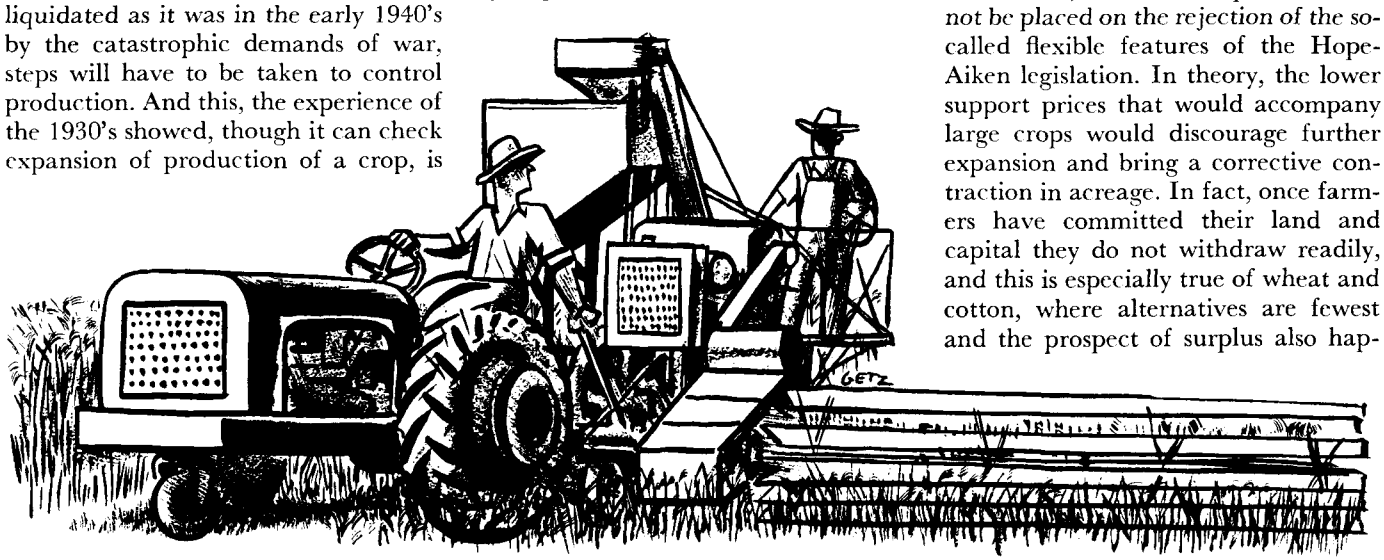
Having made his concession on the storables, Secretary Brannan faced the issue on perishables. For these—milk, dairy products, meat, poultry, and eggs—a policy of supporting prices by government purchase is almost unqualifiedly evil. There is no satisfactory way of disposing of butter, eggs, meat, or dairy products acquired in the course of support operations unless each period of surplus is followed, quite fortuitously, by an equal and opposite period of shortage. That heaven has been incredibly kind to the American farmer for many years is conceded by all, but benevolence—even to God-fearing men—must have its limits. Moreover, there is much to the argument that the consumer pays twice for such an operation, as in the case of potatoes in recent years: once in high prices and again in the taxes that keep the prices high. Secretary Brannan proposes to let these prices find their own levels and to make up the difference between what the farmer gets from the market and his guarantee with a Treasury check.

Farmers, many of them, are less enthusiastic about this arrangement than commentators, reflecting only on the pleasures of cashing a check, have been inclined to suppose. When the price is guaranteed in the market the money comes to the farmer through accustomed channels. There are no overtones of a handout. It may be more difficult to get an appropriation for a flat subsidy than for financing price supports. The latter can be, and in the past has been, partly disguised as an appropriation to repair the capital of the Commodity Credit Corporation after the support operations were completed. Finally a supported price can be enjoyed by all, large farmers as well as small.

Thus Secretary Brannan, while meeting the preferences of cotton, wheat, and tobacco farmers, has invited the hostility of others. But he has faced up to this hostility where the alternatives were least palatable and for products for which the American people have a special desire and a strong dietary need. Cheap meat and milk, moreover, are a partial cure for emerging surpluses of corn, wheat, and other grains: approximately seven times as much cereals are required to supply a given intake of calories if they are converted to livestock products as when consumed direct. The Brannan proposal includes special price arrangements on feed grains.

As compromises go, there is much to be said for Secretary Brannan's program; no other aspect merits as much attention. The final abandonment of the old pre-First World War parity standard was overdue. For commodities like wheat, where advances in production technology have been large and rapid, the parity standard was much too high. For dairy products, where there had been no comparable reduction in production costs, it was relatively too low. However this fault had been partly corrected in the Hope-Aiken law. The use of an income standard is something less than revolutionary, for it will still be necessary to calculate the prices that will yield the guaranteed income.

Likewise, too much emphasis should not be placed on the rejection of the so-called flexible features of the Hope-Aiken legislation. In theory, the lower support prices that would accompany large crops would discourage further expansion and bring a corrective contraction in acreage. In fact, once farmers have committed their land and capital they do not withdraw readily, and this is especially true of wheat and cotton, where alternatives are fewest and the prospect of surplus also hap-



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pens to be greatest. To force any considerable contraction of output, especially in times of depression, prices must be punishingly low. The minimum guarantees under the Aiken legislation might, on the contrary, prove quite attractive to wheat growers.

The Brannan Plan may well lead to production control in the form of "marketing quotas"—Congress has already been asked to authorize them for a number of major crops—but it is quite likely they would have to be imposed under the present legislation. So the charge that the Brannan Plan will "regiment" the farmers cannot be confined to this plan. Also here, as elsewhere, the term regimentation calls for definition: Nothing is proposed that wasn't a commonplace to cotton or tobacco growers before the war.

A good case could be made for paying lower prices for large crops than for small ones if only on the simple ground that it would relieve the consumer and the taxpayer of some of the cost of carrying the surplus. A much more urgently needed change in the Brannan Plan is a general lowering of the guaranteed income level. At first glance it would appear that farm income could without unfairness be raised substantially above last year's record level and that Secretary Brannan's proposal is not unreasonable.

The difficulty is that farm income is not evenly distributed and, so long as benefits are tied to production, it is the larger farms (the commercial family farms, not the California *haciendas*) that will get the lion's share. The typical Alabama tenant can expect only an extra $75 or $100.

The years which Secretary Brannan has taken for his income base include four of wartime prices and eventually will include three years of the most serious inflation the U. S. has ever experienced. Commercial farmers themselves have never looked upon these years as normal; many have marked them down as something to be enjoyed once in a lifetime. And a case can be made that in these years farmers have profited beyond their pro-rata share. Through high food prices they have been the inadvertent beneficiaries of a transfer of wealth from teachers, civil servants, pensioners, and others whose income has lagged behind living costs.

—J. K. Galbraith

Large Crops, More Mouths

The crops are growing tall this year. Good harvests are expected all over the world, and some will probably approach the records. The weather, of course, could modify this agreeable prospect; more rain is needed in various areas. The best single piece of news is the recovery—for the first time since the war—of the vital Far Eastern rice crop. Though the outlook is encouraging, it is not overwhelmingly so. World food output in general will not be up to its prewar average, and there are now more people to feed.

European farmers will not gather in quite as large a harvest as they did last year, when their crops did so much to save their continent. In some of the southern countries, the lack of rain is damaging grain. But Europe will probably have to import no more food in the crop year 1949-1950 than it did the previous year. It looks again as if the Western Hemisphere will have to do almost all of the food exporting, but, if the political situation permits, the Soviet Union may be ready to offer western Europe more grain.

The world's most formidable agricultural army—machines and men—will again work overtime in the broad acres of the United States and Canada to take in a bumper grain crop which already is overflowing all storage space. The wheat harvest in the United States is expected to be the second largest in history—just about double our home needs. Feed grains—corn, barley, and oats—should also be in good supply this year. Livestock, accordingly, ought to be more plentiful than ever on North American pasturelands.

Though most of the world is poorer than ever, once again there is reappearing the paradoxical specter of surpluses. Total world import demand for wheat, for example, will be some 850 million bushels in 1949-50, as against an exportable surplus of about 1.2 billion bushels. Sugar, too, will overflow the market-demand level with this year's new supply reaching a record height, for Java, Formosa, and the Philippines are returning to their full producing capacity for the first time since the end of the war. In an uncomfortably short time other food commodities will pile up in excess.

Yet this embarrassment of agricultural riches has occurred in only a few commodities. Storage bins for other commodities still contain less than normal carryover supplies, though it is almost four years after V-J Day. The record harvest of last year, coming after three years of shortages, went straight from bin to mouth. It is only from this year's crop that the normal housekeeping principle of setting aside a reserve will operate in any force.

Rationing still exists in some places, though the list of commodities included grows smaller and smaller. But even without that legal acknowledgment of persisting shortages, consumers in many populous areas of the world still do not get as much to eat as they did before the war. Most of the world's population gets a good deal fewer calories than the three thousand a day prescribed by scientists. Unfortunately, the greatest increases in consumption over the last decade have taken place in countries whose dietary levels were already very high.

Perhaps the most disturbing fact about this year's food outlook is that the menace of famine is still with us despite our technology—famine, whether brought on by nature, as in the drought in certain parts of Africa (Nyasaland, for example), or by man as the result of war in the Middle East (where almost a million are on international relief), and among countless multitudes in China.

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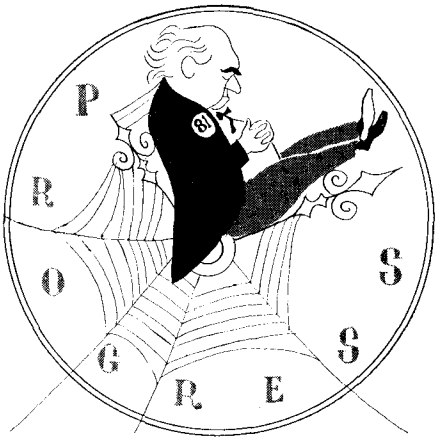
Truman's One Way Out

The only means whereby he can regain support in Congress is to strengthen the rickety party organization from the bottom up



The story goes that a few months after Harry Truman became President in 1945, a friend asked him how he was enjoying his honeymoon with Congress. "If this is a honeymoon," the President is supposed to have answered, "God help marriage." He could hardly know that he was to enjoy even less bliss after the Republicans took control of Congress in the mid-term elections of 1946.

The President's prospects for a pacific, friendly Congress looked bright last November and still brighter in January after the Fair Dealers had clipped the wings of the House Rules Committee. But again the honeymoon was extremely short. Since January the Administration has won virtually no legislative victories; in six months Congress has delivered grudgingly on only a fraction of the dozen or more measures that the President called for in his State of the Union message.

At first Mr. Truman was patient with Congress. Then, in February, he warned his foes that he might have to "get on the train again and make another tour around the country." Later his tactics changed once more. He proclaimed that he and Congress would agree in the end on a lot more things than they disagreed on. He began to work more closely with Democratic leaders Lucas and Rayburn. This spring, still troubled, the President tried a new tack: the word got out that errant Congressmen would not get their slices of the patronage pie. Today Mr. Truman's attitude seems to be one of watchful waiting, with the big stick barely visible.

Obviously Mr. Truman has been improvising. He has been shifting erratically between two courses—at times trying to show how splendidly he and Congress get along (symbolized by his too-casual visits to Capitol Hill), at other times threatening rebellious legislators with political reprisals.

Physically, the White House and the Capitol are a short taxi trip apart. Politically they are leagues distant. The gulf between the President and Congress—the most serious failing of our system of government—is not a matter simply of "personality differences." It rises from the fact that the President and Congress, while both representing "the people," actually respond to different alignments of the electorate. They are trying to please different sets of Americans.

The President counts mainly on the city vote. He knows that his political future turns chiefly on how a dozen large urban and industrial states vote on election day. Different Presidential candidates seek different combinations of voting groups and sections, but any aspirant for the White House will tend first to cultivate labor, consumers, tenants, and the like. Then he will try to add farmers, businessmen, and other elements.

Congress, on the other hand, is dominated by Senators and Representatives from rural and mixed urban-rural areas. As a whole it is more responsive to middle-class elements in small towns —to suburbanites, home owners, farmers, businessmen, professional people, and producer groups generally. The politics of many Congressional districts revolves around small-town courthouse machines, a few business spokesmen, and leaders of organized groups, such as farmers and veterans. The President thinks mainly in terms of masses of votes in the populous areas, the Congressman in terms of persons holding a few key positions. Gerrymandering and other types of inequitable representation enlarge the strength of rural groups in Congress, throwing it still more out of line with the President politically.

Electoral provisions in the Constitution make matters worse. Under our staggered election system, all the Representatives and two-thirds of the Senators are chosen in off-year elections when the President himself is not running and thus cannot pose the primary campaign issues in his own terms. The off-year elections are low-grade affairs: apathy is widespread, the vote small compared to that cast in the stirring Presidential contests.

Senators and Representatives often arrive in Washington with the theory that they are "envoys of locality." They are not nation-minded (nor of course world-minded) because they were not elected by the nation—only by a small piece of it. How can a collection of local agents be converted into a national body? The usual devices are party caucuses, party loyalty, party leaders. But a glance at any House or Senate roll-call will show that Congress is not ruled by parties but by sections, pressure groups, and petty ideologies.

Minority forces in Congress operate

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through four venerable institutions. Each of these helps deepen the chasm between Capitol Hill and the White House. They are:

Seniority: Called the "senility rule" by younger members of Congress, this device gives added power to those more or less sluggish states and districts that re-elect their representatives year after year. The cards are stacked against the areas where party rivalry is keen, and the turnover of Congressmen high. Power is centered in the hands of the politicians who are the least exposed to the problems of industrial civilization, and least prepared to deal with them.

Filibuster: The one-man filibuster is part of American political folklore. The organized, cooperative filibuster is a more serious matter. Speaking in relays, half a dozen Senators can clog the legislative machinery indefinitely. Until this year the obstructionists could be muzzled—after a suitable interval—if two-thirds of the Senators on the floor voted for cloture. After winning the civil-rights filibuster of last March, the Southerners imposed a harsh peace. Cloture may be adopted now only by two-thirds of the *whole* Senate membership; since at least a dozen members are usually absent from the floor, the new rule leaves an absolute veto power with a handful of Senators. More than ever before, the filibuster is both a symbol and a source of minority rule in American government.

Committees: Visitors to the Capitol are often surprised and sometimes disgusted by the number of Congressmen absent from the House or Senate floor. Actually most legislative work is conducted in committees. These "little legislatures," as Woodrow Wilson called them, control the substance and fate of most bills. This situation makes it all the more desirable that the committees be representative of Congress and the nation as a whole. But such is not the case. The agriculture committees, for example, are packed with farm representatives, the House Public Lands Committee with legislators plugging for reclamation and irrigation projects.

Rules Committee: In the House this committee has been a sort of counterpart to the filibuster in the Senate. It has been able to kill bills by refusing to report them, by amending them drastically as the price of admitting them to the floor, by replacing bills adopted by other committees with wholly new measures. The reform of last January curtailed but did not abolish these powers. Recently, the committee bottled up the housing bill for several weeks, greatly reducing the bill's chances for passage.

All these factors help explain why the President and Congress are often in conflict. Pinning responsibility for action or inaction on the proper officials is extremely difficult. Take the case of the Taft-Hartley Act. As it looks now, only a parliamentary expert—not the average man at the polls in November, 1950—will know what party or group was accountable for whatever hybrid (if any) bill is finally enacted. Wilson could complain today, as he did years ago: "Nobody stands sponsor for the policy of the government. A dozen men originate it; a dozen compromises twist and alter it." The situation makes for irresponsibility; it also makes for deadlock and stalemate.

The problem is not remote or theoretical. It is very much with us in mid-1949, as Congress enters the final weeks of its session. One year ago the Democrats adopted a Fair Deal platform after a free and open debate. Candidate Truman hammered out the details of that platform in metropolises and whistle-stops throughout the nation. His victory and the Democratic recapture of Congress could not be explained away in terms of a seductive radio voice or weak opposition.

A majority of the voters endorsed the Democratic platform and candidates. But for six months now the will of that majority has been thwarted. Behind our democratic façade the minority rules in Congress—as the world can see.

A number of remedies have been suggested. Some of these involve the internal reform of Congress. Experts, including a number of members of Congress, have urged the abolition of minority devices such as the seniority rule and the filibuster and the establishment of legislative cabinets and councils. There are two difficulties. In the first place, Congress does not want to reform itself; it carefully omitted any important changes from the Reorganization Act of 1946. Furthermore, these proposals would not touch the basic trouble—the parochialism and sectionalism in Congress, the effects of staggered elections, the big representation of rural areas.

There have been more drastic proposals. Ever since the 1870's, when Godkin was opening the pages of *The Nation* to their ideas, scholars and journalists have been urging a shift to the Cabinet form of government. If the President had a falling-out with Congress, he could dissolve the legislature, and an election could be held to determine whether the Chief Executive or the opposition Congressmen had the backing of the voters. Then we would have the sturdy but supple system that Great Britain enjoys. But the prospect of gaining the needed constitutional amendments is almost hopeless. And since the Cabinet system in Britain works well only because it is rooted in disciplined, responsible party organization, the chances are not very good that the same system could be grounded successfully in our country, where party organization is so rickety.

What, then, can Mr. Truman do? A clue to the answer lies hidden in the annals of the very first "Democratic" President. During most of his Administration Thomas Jefferson's relations with Congress were friendly and fruitful to a degree that has never been sur-

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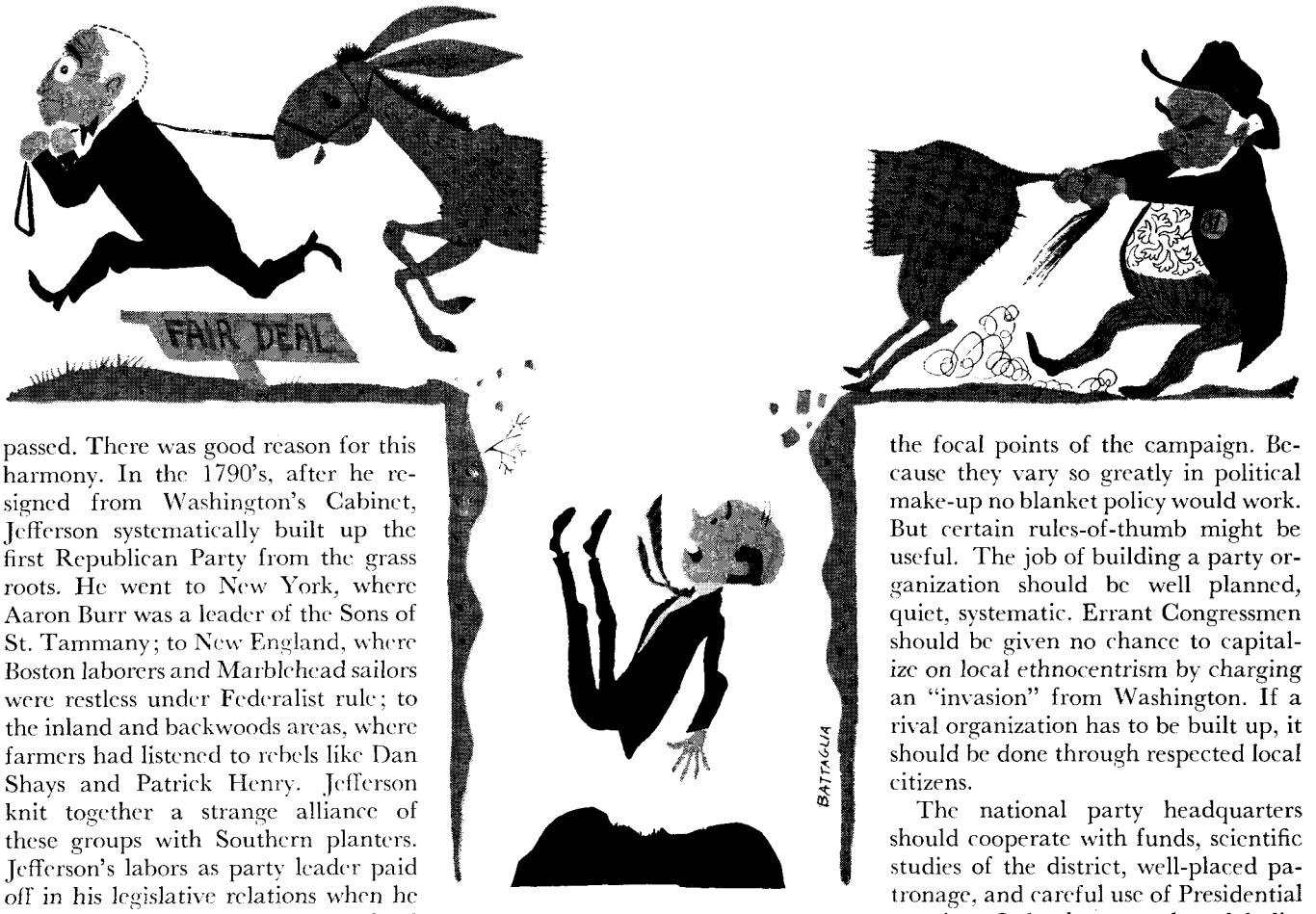

passed. There was good reason for this harmony. In the 1790's, after he resigned from Washington's Cabinet, Jefferson systematically built up the first Republican Party from the grass roots. He went to New York, where Aaron Burr was a leader of the Sons of St. Tammany; to New England, where Boston laborers and Marblehead sailors were restless under Federalist rule; to the inland and backwoods areas, where farmers had listened to rebels like Dan Shays and Patrick Henry. Jefferson knit together a strange alliance of these groups with Southern planters. Jefferson's labors as party leader paid off in his legislative relations when he became President. His lieutenants held the key positions in the House. The caucus became a potent instrument for President and party. The President controlled committee appointments, and when it became necessary to dislodge the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, Jefferson actually pressed men outside Congress to become candidates for office. Is it possible for the Jeffersonian formula of party government to be adapted successfully to twentieth-century conditions? Nobody knows whether it can be, but the experiment should be tried. A stronger party system is the only way to combine the two great essentials of modern government—leadership and responsibility. We have had leadership from strong Presidents, but only at a steep price—a dangerous increase in Presidential power to the degree that it has become heavily personalized, unstable, and unpredictable. Party government means the creation of other national party leaders who will stabilize Presidential power without cramping the President as national leader.

How can the job be done? Obviously work must start at the ward, precinct, and county level. The national party leaders who want to write their platform into law should join hands with the thousands of local amateurs and professionals who have the same objective. A tremendous potential of political talent and power lies almost dormant in the localities; it should be vitalized and harnessed as has been done in New York by the Fair Deal Democrats who sent Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jr., to Congress, and by the Young Republicans around Oren Root, Jr. The party organization and machinery should be quite thoroughly overhauled, so that the leaders will become more responsible and the rank and file better organized. The national party committees should be shaken out of their torpor and converted into active agencies of leadership and control.

The role of Mr. Truman and other party leaders would be decisive. Everything would depend on how they wielded several weapons at their disposal—party funds, patronage, party machinery, the President's prestige.

The Congressional districts must be the focal points of the campaign. Because they vary so greatly in political make-up no blanket policy would work. But certain rules-of-thumb might be useful. The job of building a party organization should be well planned, quiet, systematic. Errant Congressmen should be given no chance to capitalize on local ethnocentrism by charging an "invasion" from Washington. If a rival organization has to be built up, it should be done through respected local citizens.

The national party headquarters should cooperate with funds, scientific studies of the district, well-placed patronage, and careful use of Presidential prestige. Only the more hopeful districts should be tackled at first; a few victories would probably have a wholesome effect on the voting records of other Democratic legislators.

Not the Fair Deal alone but the Republican Party, too, would gain from a successful move to energize the Democratic machinery. The G.O.P. today (unlike the Tory party in Great Britain) suffers from the usual ills of an opposition—it is leaderless, disorganized, and deeply divided. If the Democratic Party manages to reconstruct itself, the Republicans will have to follow suit, if only as the price of survival.

Thus the opportunity that lies open to Harry Truman involves more than the fate of his own program, or even of his own party. It involves the effectiveness and responsibility of our whole system of government for years to come. If he can make even a first step toward party government, his place in American political history will have a much broader base than the "miracle election" of 1948.

—James MacGregor Burns

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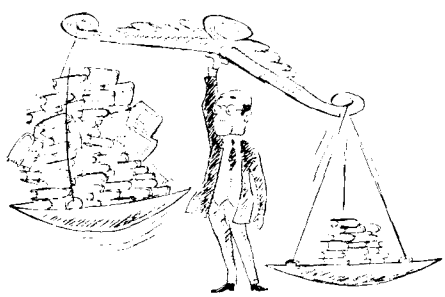
To Man's Measure . . .



Books

Sometimes those paintings that bore the reticent title *Portrait of a Gentleman* would have the gentleman on a horse, or patting a horse, or standing, triumphant, in a landscape with dead birds arranged in pairs at his feet and a hunting dog beside him. When the gentleman was not merely given to the chase but belonged to one of the liberal professions, the portrait, often as not, would show him in his library. He would not be reading—it was assumed that he had been reading all his life—but, seated, he would hold a book in his hand because it was a pleasure to touch a book, and behind him would be the books of his library, interrupted only to provide wall space for the portrait of the gentleman's father—on a horse or in a library.

A recent photograph of a well-known lawyer, Mr. Eustace Seligman, departs abruptly from the old-fashioned pattern. In this portrait, which was published in *Life,* something has happened to the library. The books are not on shelves; they are heaped on the floor. Four hundred and forty-nine of them, received by Mr. Seligman from the Book-of-the-Month Club since 1926, are piled up so high that all one can see of their owner, who is standing behind them, is his face. It peers through a cleft in this mountain of books, as if Mr. Seligman were about to be walled in. Books do not weigh in men's lives by their numbers. The books, discovered for oneself, left on the library table—as in the old-fashioned portraits—may be only five or six; they outweigh Dr. Hutchins's "hundred," they turn the scale against the Book-of-the-Month Club's hundred million.

Fewer Books

Before he was eighteen Gilbert Green had discovered his book: *The Communist Manifesto.* Mr. Green, a defendant in the trial of the eleven Communist leaders in New York, made a statement in court to explain his devotion to the Communist Party. The rhetoric of this statement involved the repeated use of the phrase "I learned." For instance, "I learned that the first social system developed by man was primitive tribal society," or "I learned that the motive force in the bringing about of these transformations and changes from one social system to another is the class struggle in society," or again, "I also learned that Marxism-Leninism was a science that explained the world for the first time so that I could understand it."

These discoveries are not quoted to sum up Marxism or distort it; they are needed to explain an exchange between the court and the defendant:

THE COURT: "You learned all that before you even became a Communist?"

GREEN: "My becoming a Communist was not a matter of walking into a dime movie . . . at a chance moment. . . . That was a turning point in my life and I made an effort to study this thing through to the fullest extent before I made that decision.

"It so happens that there are some people who mature at eighteen and some who never mature, and it so happens that at eighteen I read all those books and I came to a mature conclusion in terms of what I wanted to do. And I did decide at that age to dedicate myself to this cause. I don't regret it today, nor shall I ever regret that decision."

These remarks were written about in the papers as if they were funnier than anything the reporters had ever heard. They are not so funny as all that. It is not funny at eighteen to have learned everything you will ever need to know.

Of course when you look at a Communist or quote a Communist you are expected, once again, to define and condemn Communism, if possible in bright new phrases, but that gets a little tedious and we must be excused from it. What we are looking at is the boy Green at eighteen—in Chicago, without benefit of the Book-of-the-Month Club. He was born in 1906; his father, who died when he was nine, was a tailor; his mother a dressmaker; he worked at many jobs after school hours, in a drugstore, in an ice-cream parlor, just like so many other young men who go through a hard time before their success story starts. During summer vacations he worked in an insurance company, a belt factory, and a mattress plant. The *Daily Worker* gives this background with a sort of proprietary air about misery, as if only a Communist leader has the right to a miserable background. Misery, however, belongs to more than one party. Young Green might just as well have gone in for politics as a Chicago Democrat; conceivably this might have been a more lucrative way of showing his concern for American society. In any case Green joined the Young Communist League in 1924—at eighteen, the year of his maturity—and the following year became a member of the party.

He said he did this because he read books. What interests us is the meeting that took place between his youthful curiosity, his fervor, perhaps, or his greed, or his devotion to mankind—all the qualities that we cannot guess at or

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measure—and the books that were to determine his life. What we would like to know is who introduced him to the books? Or did he find them himself? He says that he read Jack London, and who has not, Upton Sinclair, "every inch a careerist business man" (*Literaturnaya Gazeta*, April 20, 1949), and then, of course, Marx, Engels, and Lenin. But what else? He mentions Charles Beard. But nothing else? No Dostoievsky? No Guy de Maupassant? No Decameron? Nothing for fun? No poetry? No Cynara? Was he even then faithful only in an imposed fashion to an imposed dream? He does not say; he sticks to the Soviet classics—except that he is not up-to-date about Sinclair—and they make a meager diet.

That is how it happened, Green says, and we cannot invent anything else. But what interests us is that everyone at eighteen, or before eighteen, makes these encounters, unpredictable both in themselves and in their results. There is for everyone this sudden opening up of the world. What has to be said is that Green's "some people mature at eighteen," to anyone looking into his own experience, rings true. Green speaks for his youth, for everyone's youth, and when people laughed at the self-assurance with which he was able to date his conversion they were not laughing at Communism, they were old men laughing bitterly about what happens to all of us after conversion.

We spell out the words, we parse the sentences; suddenly we read. We scan a line of verse; suddenly we are aware of poetry. We meet our first injustice; suddenly we are mature. It is only then that we can make our serious mistakes.

And Paul Robeson

We shall have to become accustomed to the fact that those classes formerly

called "upper" are not the only people who have the privilege of preferring some other country to their own. The wealthy have always driven a hard bargain with their countries, leaving them for protracted periods or for good whenever their demands were not met. Byron forsook England when society could not tolerate his personal life nor the critics his verses. Pitt's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, died in Asia Minor after living there, self-exiled, for years, domineering, lonely, and strange, but more at home than in London. On our side there is, of course, the example of Henry James, who loved America yet lived outside it, and the far more disagreeable one of Henry Adams, who, although remaining, believed that he was living out the last of a life in a country that was utterly lost.

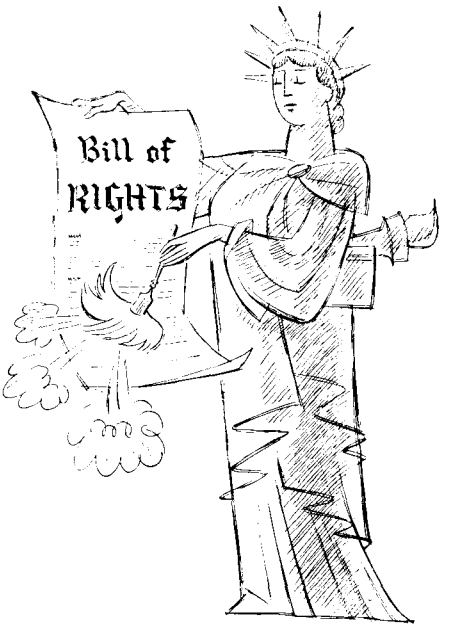
In England, everybody thought ill of Byron's departure; in America, we thought ill of James's; but we did not think ill of ourselves, arriving, all of us, from nations we were forsaking.

For, as Roosevelt once said, gallantly accurate in the face of prevailing Dutchess County opinion, "we are all immigrants." Immigrants are not the most loyal children of the nations in which they were born.

It is all a little ridiculous to worry about because in the days before nationalism people moved as they wanted to move, with only lions, deserts, and pirates to interfere with their going in search of a place that would please them. In a free world that still would be so. But nationalism came with all the business about our country right or wrong, and then extreme nationalism came, and nobody was allowed to go anywhere at all, and then the two wars came, and now the world is divided between Communists and anti-Communists, and whatever side of the world a man is born in, he is supposed to stay there and never look at the other side or listen to it.

But that does not mean that he should not stop, look, and listen attentively to what is happening where he is. In America, sometimes, great confusion arises when something that is happening here is thought to be something happening in Russia.

For instance, there is Paul Robeson with his boundless admiration for the peoples of the Soviet Union, and his pro-Communist activities here and on



his travels abroad. The confusion arises when we mistake Mr. Robeson for a Russian who deliberately got himself born in America, the grandson of a slave, in order to lead American Negroes first into treason and then into new servitude in a Communist world. That is the attitude taken by many American Negro leaders toward Mr. Robeson. It can be taken legitimately if you are talking politics.

But you cannot take it when you think of Mr. Robeson as a *man*—as you think of Henry James and Henry Adams—that is to say, when you are thinking of an individual American who is proclaiming his distress at one aspect or another of the country. No matter what such an American says or does, you have to listen to him as if he had you in a room and you could not get out. You have to answer him even if he keeps looking at the notes he took in Moscow. All America has to take the trouble to answer any individual American who is troubled about America.

"I am born and bred in this America of ours," said Mr. Robeson upon his return from Russia, "I love a part of it. But it's up to the rest of America when I shall love it with the same intensity that I love the Negro people from whom I spring—in the way I love progressives in the Caribbean, the black and Indian peoples of South and Central America, the peoples of China and Southeast Asia, yes, suffering people the world over, in the way that I deeply and intensely love the Soviet people. That burden of proof rests upon America."

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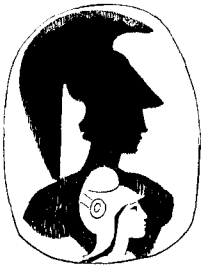
Frenchman and German

The memory of three invasions has raised French suspicion and fear, which now for the first time have a chance of being dispelled



The criticisms which the British and Americans often make of the French attitude toward Germany are quite unfair. They believe the French have what might be called a "Richelieu complex," which undoubtedly does exist in some quarters, but is pretty well confined to a few Quai d'Orsay officials and army leaders. What determines the French people's feeling toward Germany is distrust or, in more stark terms, fear. And if we put ourselves in the position of France we cannot say that the fear is unfounded.

Three times in eighty years France has been invaded by the Germans. An impartial historian may say that France is partly to blame for this recurrent phenomenon, but the French man in the street, like his counterpart in any other country, is not in the habit, and has little chance, of checking up on the responsibilities of his government. He considers himself well off at home, holding on to what he has, without bothering any of his neighbors, and thinks of the Germans as unwelcome visitors who descend upon him once a generation to take something away. And he has a strong impression, borne out by the events of 1940, whose lesson has not been forgotten, that his friends off the European mainland have a way of dispensing promises of every kind and then leaving him at the last minute to cope with the Germans alone while they catch up on their tardy military preparations.

In the end, of course, everything comes out all right, but meanwhile France has been invaded and paid a large toll of lives and money. After that the Anglo-Americans, touchingly enough, hark back to the same old story: The Germans aren't really so bad and we all should help them get on their feet again.

How would the United States feel if Mexico had twice its population and four times its industrial power and had invaded it three times in the last eighty years? Factors such as these have to be taken into consideration if we are to understand how the average Frenchman reacts to the Germans. As a matter of fact, the French attitude toward the Germans has softened appreciably during the last year, and there now exists a much better chance that Franco-German relations will be made up of something more than dread and hostility.

In 1940 there was something very like a complete reversal of the previous relationship between France and Germany. I am not speaking of Vichy and of those Frenchmen—less numerous than is generally believed—who believed that a French government copied after the Third Reich would suit them better than the Third Republic. The fact is that for a while the Germans behaved extremely well in France. The conduct of their troops was exemplary, and however sinister Hitler's ultimate designs on France may have been, the occupation authorities did their best at first to win the friendship of the French people.

They were motivated by, among other things, a sincere admiration for a genuinely civilized country and a veiled envy for the *savoir vivre* that is its undisputed accomplishment. At the administrative and diplomatic level things did not always go so evenly, and the Germans, as is often the case, did not carry out their good intentions with all the grace that could have been desired.

But among the common people and the soldiers, between Karl and Jean, relations were fairly smooth, and Jean was nearly persuaded that Karl was not such a monster as he had always been painted. This fundamental *rapprochement,* which might have had important effects, was cut short by the Resistance movement and the punitive measures taken by the Germans. The French claim that their Resistance, aside from being a manifestation of the national conscience, was a spontaneous reaction to German oppression. The Germans, if they could speak, would say that their oppression was a necessary defense against Resistance activities. Probably there is some truth on both sides. But the fact is that at the moment of liberation French hatred for the Germans was at its height. And this phenomenon was not merely sentimental; it was political and hence reasoned as well.

The French are in some ways the most military—not the most militaristic—people of Europe; their army is the apple of their eye. The crushing defeat of 1940 was one of the hardest blows suffered by the French in all their history—not merely for its military implications, but because it destroyed a myth. The facts of the situation suggested that the French Army was poorly led, poorly equipped, and unenthusiastic. But, for the sake of saving the national honor, the French decided that defeat was caused by betrayal.

In 1940 Pétain and many other Frenchmen could see no alternative to signing the armistice and pursuing a policy of collaboration with the Germans. For Germany had apparently won the war. A couple of years later it turned out that Pétain had been mistaken. His wrong guess might have

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cost France dearly if, of course, other Frenchmen had not seen the necessity of having their country counted among the conquering powers when the war was over—and done something about it. Hence the urgency of playing up France as a country betrayed by its leaders but valiantly fighting an underground war against the oppressor. Which was, to a large extent, true.

Thus in 1945 a France which had resisted and conquered was determined to make an end once and for all of the German menace. France, of course, was not alone in this intention. In 1945 the Morgenthau Plan was developed in the United States and the Vansittart Plan in England. Anyone who failed to see the need of dividing Germany into a number of powerless small units was considered a fool or a traitor. Now, given the geographical position and the historical experience of the French, it is no wonder that they should be the last to give up the project of dismembering Germany.

A confederation of German states would in many ways have been a splendid solution, but its supporters forgot that in the twentieth century, if we wish to follow a democratic procedure and perhaps even if we don't, we cannot determine the form of a state simply by imposing a constitution upon it. We can only create a confederation if the people really desire it; if, instead, they want to be one big, unified nation, the confederation will last only as long as we back it up by force. Also there is a contradiction between the current move to promote economic—and to some degree political—unity in Europe and the idea of splitting up the largest European country into small parts.

The problem of German unity has been resolved, at least for the time being, in a manner that nobody expected four years ago. In 1945 hardly anyone dreamed that eastern and western Germany could remain divided very long. The line of demarcation does not correspond to any of the historical divisions taken into account by those who favored a confederation. Yet here it is and the chances are it will stay—at least until the United States and Russia reach some agreement on the disposal of Germany.

France was the last of the victorious powers to recognize the exist-

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ence of this line. For a long time the French indulged in a form of escapism and wishful thinking which relieved them of the necessity of facing a number of thorny problems both at home and abroad. But once they had faced the fact their well-known capacity for logical thinking caused them to reach two important conclusions:

First, that the gravest danger of the day is from Russia and not from Germany, and that the German problem must be reconsidered in the light of this greater danger.

Second, that there are now two Germanys instead of one. France is no longer faced by a Germany of seventy million inhabitants. There are only forty-five million in the western zone, and France can deal with them on a basis of equality, perhaps even superiority. This, too, puts the problem in a different light.

Now that two problems of capital importance for France—control of the Saar and of the Ruhr—may be satisfactorily resolved, the French have concentrated their attention on how best to reintegrate Germany and make it a vital contributor to what is still vaguely called the western European community. Contrary to all expectations, the question of what status Germany is to have in the new Council of Europe was brought up by the French. It may be objected that the statute of the Council of Europe provides for the form rather than the substance of German reintegration. True enough. But even if the official French point of view goes no farther than this form, we can nevertheless see other interesting and encouraging developments.

The French, as we all know, envisage the Council of Europe from the point of view of defense—that is, defense of the continent. But there is an increasing realization that Europe will never be strong enough to defend itself on its own ground unless France and Germany come to an agreement. Once such an agreement is reached, there would be real and vital continental unity. Recently, the French have taken pains to make a thorough study of Germany and the Germans, not merely from the point of view of an occupying power, but from a political and human angle as well. They have come to the conclusion that a European community in which Germany would take part on equal terms with the other nations is the only prospect that awakens any response in the otherwise lethargic young people of Germany. German youth seems to be looking primarily toward collaboration with France and to be waiting with considerable enthusiasm for France to take the first step in this direction.

It looks as if the problem which has for so long tormented France, that of securing its own safety by means of a strict supervision of Germany, can be solved through a European federation. Take, for instance, the delicate matter of rearmament. There are those who think that it is better under certain circumstances for France to submit to inspection from a central European authority if Germany is thereby subject to the same control.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me repeat that this is not the official stand of the French government. I have described the personal ideas of a group of people who are looking for a courageous and intelligent solution of a problem important for all Europe, that of the relationship between France and

Germany. Enormous progress is reflected by the fact that people can express and discuss ideas of this kind without being accused of treason. Indeed, it is astonishing how little open opposition such ideas have encountered, and with what speed they have gained currency.

Still, it would be premature to suppose that the problem is well on its way to solution. The long-standing French grudge against Germany is momentarily quiescent, but it exists, and any trifle might rouse a tidal wave that would sweep away all the new ideas. Communist propaganda constantly adds fuel to the fire of nationalist feeling against Germany. This sore subject is, indeed, one of the Communists' principal levers against the present government. And the de Gaullists, too, with certain reservations, play the same game. Moreover, this new current of French political thought presupposes that western Germany is all that is under consideration. If the four-power conference had brought East and West together and revived a united Germany of seventy million inhabitants the terms of the problem would have changed altogether, and I doubt whether even the best-intentioned Frenchmen would have been for reconciliation. It is, nonetheless, interesting to find any such trend of thought as that which we have described above. Here lies the best and perhaps the only hope for the future of European peace and civilization.

What can the other European powers and the United States do to strengthen this opportunity? Tact and patience are the first needs. It is easy enough to lose patience and criticize the French when they speak of German affairs, but we must remember that even the strongest French government has to take into account a long-existent frame of mind which cannot be altered in a hurry. France must be encouraged in the right direction, without putting the slightest pressure upon it. Much can be achieved by persuasion, but France must not be put face to face with an accomplished fact without any previous consultation.

The French government's position is a delicate one. Sometimes it is best for it to say that it had no alternative to acting as it did; at others it needs to assert that it has acted on its own initiative. It is necessary also—and here we have perhaps the most delicate factor of all—that the Germans should take their collaboration seriously, that they should not start out by asking too much, since the gulf between the two peoples is far from easy to bridge. Americans may very well influence the Germans on this point. Let them, above all, not be in too great haste. It is substance that counts, not window-dressing, and substance cannot be attained overnight.

—Flavius

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The Tragedy of a Statesman

The suicide of James Forrestal points out how the crushing pressures on the nation's servants can endanger their lives and their country

"If you wish to be happy, it is not enough to be adequate to your job; you must be more than adequate." This was the comment I overheard at Arlington Cemetery as I came away from the funeral ceremonies for James Vincent Forrestal. I looked around, and it was one of Forrestal's best friends speaking. It was, I pondered, the explanation of the tragedy of a man who had a sensitivity and a sense of responsibility unusual in our public life.

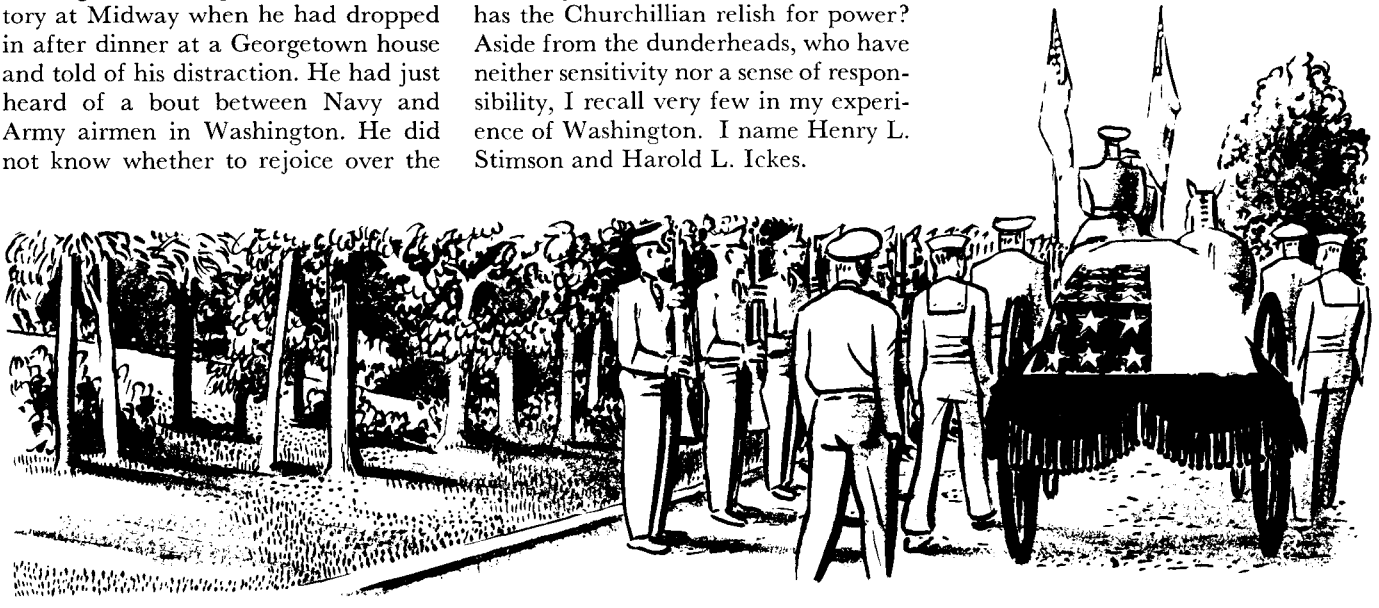
Forrestal felt inadequate—inadequate to a job as formidable as any in America's giving. As first Secretary of Defense he had to pull together into a team the warring branches of the armed services. Nobody was more distressed by the conflict than Forrestal. Within his own experience the brawling—even the fisticuffs—had gone back to the evening after that great Air-Navy victory at Midway when he had dropped in after dinner at a Georgetown house and told of his distraction. He had just heard of a bout between Navy and Army airmen in Washington. He did not know whether to rejoice over the news from Midway or to grieve over the aftermath in the capital.

Forrestal had come a long way since this event in a war triumphantly won. He was responsible for what General Marshall would call "our military posture" in case a new war broke out. The responsibility wore Forrestal down to a crack-up long before the resignation which, according to some obituaries, reduced him to the sudden inactivity that caused him to take his life in its fifty-eighth year.

The tragedy of Forrestal has induced a lot of thinking about the burden which falls upon our public servants. The jobs we have given them since the war ended and the great tussle with Soviet Russia began are truly staggering. America is seated on the very summit of the world. It follows that the office-holders in our executive branch are carrying crushing weights of responsibility. Who, in one's experience, has been more than equal to this back-breaking task? Who, that is to say, has the Churchillian relish for power? Aside from the dunderheads, who have neither sensitivity nor a sense of responsibility, I recall very few in my experience of Washington. I name Henry L. Stimson and Harold L. Ickes.

Mr. Stimson is one of the most inarticulate of men, yet no man could rise to great occasions as he could. Witness his handling, as Secretary of War, of the neutralization proposal which was received from the distraught and lonely President Quezon, resentful over what he felt was by the United States desertion when the Japanese attacked the Philippines.

There was no hesitation from Mr. (as everybody called him) Stimson. By one swift and burning message he turned Quezon into a bitter-end campaigner side by side with MacArthur. For the message signed by Roosevelt that did the trick was Stimson's. The Assistant Secretary of War, John J. McCloy, to whom Stimson imparted a measure of his statesmanship, and who is now our High Commissioner in Germany, often tells the story. Stimson was urgent in his immediacy. "This is a man's job, and I will handle it," he told McCloy, and McCloy recounts this



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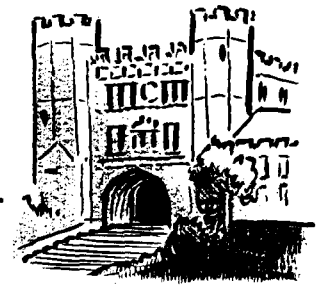

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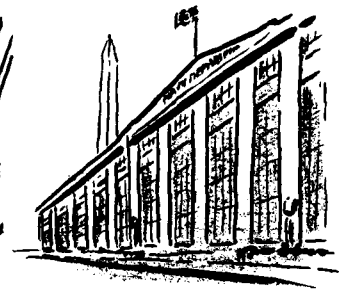

Navy Department

instance of the greatness of Stimson with delight over his own relegation, and with respect for his old chief.

Think of the old curmudgeon, Harold L. Ickes, Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, when the Germans in 1938 sought a supply of helium, an American monopoly, the disposal of which was vested by law in Secretary Ickes. There was no war on: Business-as-usual ruled our relations with Germany. The State Department was behaving with the utmost punctilio. Even the President felt a moral obligation to sell. But Ickes refused to yield. He saw the future clearly and insisted that only a grant of the right of American supervision would persuade him to sign a contract with Hitler's agents. The Germans refused. They did not get their helium. The fuming and fretting in Washington, as in Berlin, left Secretary Ickes unperturbed. He was sure of his powers, and assumed them fearlessly.

The zestful acceptance of power shown by Stimson and Ickes would be hard to duplicate in the Administrations of the last few decades. President Roosevelt? Hot and cold in this respect. Even Roosevelt's end, to judge from James F. Byrnes's book, was hastened by uncertainty. He had banked on Soviet cooperation in peacemaking. But the decision had already been taken in Moscow to rely on conflict instead of cooperation. Roosevelt knew it before he died, and though he bade Churchill be of good cheer in a last message referring to Stalin's charge of bad faith, his habitual euphoria disappeared under the realization that his gamble had blown up.

It was Forrestal's role after the war to be put into the most exposed position in the war of nerves. But his was a case of responsibility without authority. It was a tragic role, but truth compels the statement that nobody was to blame but himself.

I recall a lunch with him six months before the enactment of the so-called unification of the armed services, in the presence of my colleague, Marquis W. Childs. The Navy was holding out against the kind of unification that the nation, sick of the spectacle of divided command in the Pacific warmaking, was demanding. Forrestal was Navy, therefore anti-unification. I suggested to him that in spite of, or perhaps because of, this, he was the logical nominee as first Secretary of Defense. He shrugged his shoulders modestly. I went on that, in view of this inevitable choice, he ought to take the offensive. There was little use in heading an organization—to put this national issue on a personal basis—that was not manageable. Why not give me an interview, and we would see whether we could get national circulation for it? Childs backed me up. Forrestal thought a while, talked, as was his wont, tentatively and inconclusivly, but never said anything more about our proposal.

Forrestal would never get out in front and, even as undersecretary in charge of procurement for the Navy, left his opposite number in the War Department, Judge Patterson, to carry the ball.

As everybody expected, so-called unification was subsequently enacted. And, in deference to Navy diehardism, it was enacted on the lowest common denominator of agreement, which was the retention of separate services loosely connected through an organization linked in form but not in deed under a Secretary of Defense. One reason that even this kind of organization was acceptable to the Navy was that Forrestal got the Secretaryship. It was an impossible assignment. The Washington *Post* headed its editorial on the event "Quadruplification," and this was followed by a protest from the Air Force for unfairness, though two years later the protestants said the protest was made because the description was "too darned right." All that was really done was to put another service, a national defense service, on top of Air, Navy, and Army. The links were so feeble as to be virtually nonexistent.

Forrestal had no chief of staff, no undersecretary. The Secretaries of the Army, Navy, and Air had access to the President and to Congress, and were independently appointed. Altogether Forrestal had to work, it is said, with seventeen administrators operating over his head. There was no change in the lack of system or in the individual authority of the Joint Chiefs. The budget remained unchanged, with the three services making up their own estimates, and battling independently with the Bureau of the Budget and lobbying interminably and bitterly with Congress for acceptance. Forrestal set up a rabbit warren of *ad-hoc* committees and a succession of temporary young civilian aides, mainly lawyers, to soften the bickering and make life fairly tolerable. The Pentagon became bedlam and a nest of intrigue and backbiting during this pioneer regime.

Often Forrestal would defend the setup by saying that a chief of staff would have too much power for the American stomach. In reality he was echoing the Navy desire to keep its independence.

Only those who have been through the experience can testify to the demoniac guardianship of privilege by the Navy. Of all the Secretaries of the Navy in modern memory, it is said that only Secretary Charles Francis Adams in Hoover's Administration could handle the Navy. But, after all, he was an Adams, as well as one of the great yachtsmen of our time. *He* did not deprecate his association with the sea in

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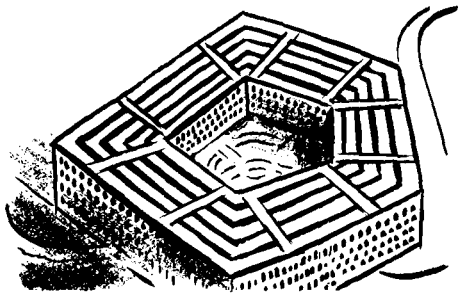
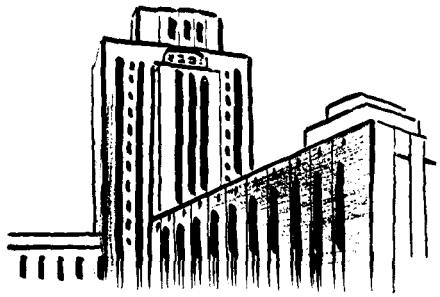


The Pentagon



Bethesda Naval Hospital

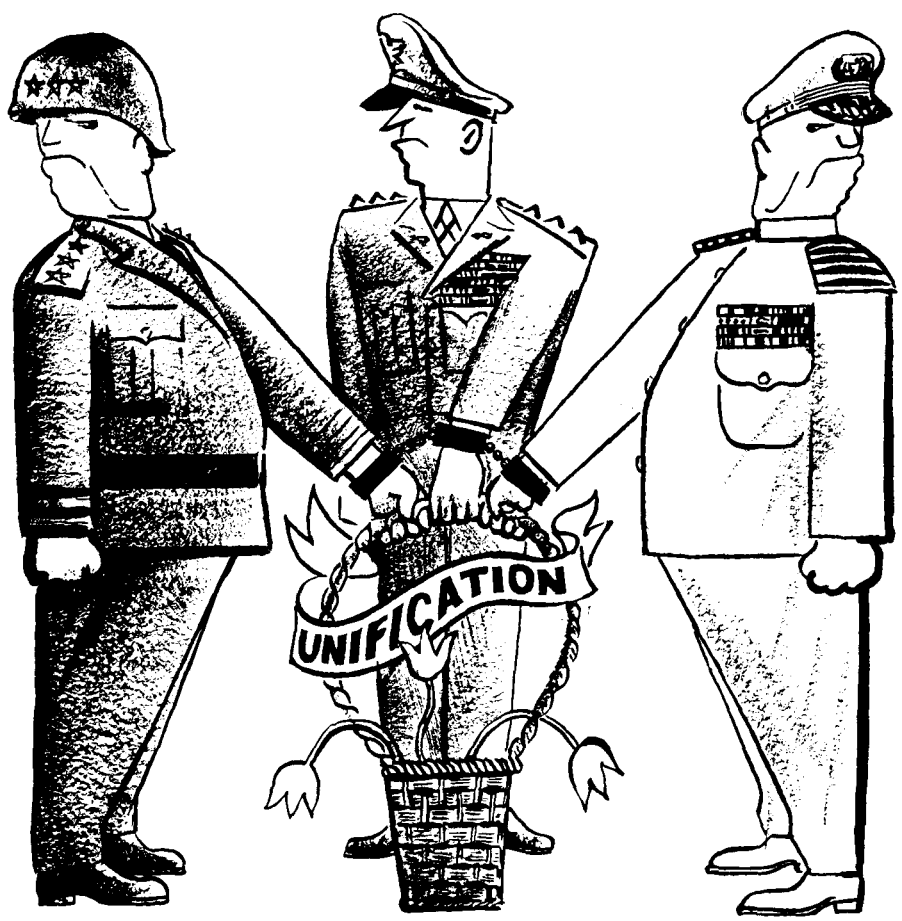
the manner of Secretary Matthews, who pointed out that, after all, he owned a rowboat in Nebraska. Nobody since Adams has approached his standing with the admirals. One of the stories of wartime Washington is the proud boast of Secretary Knox that he had the confidence of that dour sea dog and wartime Chief of Operations, Admiral Ernest J. King, to the extent that King was now telling him what was going on. Apocryphal or not, the story betrays the atmosphere of the relations between a Secretary of the Navy and the admirals. Accordingly, in defending the "unification" setup, Forrestal was merely echoing the Navy determination to preserve its independence.

Before Forrestal died he came around to the view that the Joint Chiefs should cease to be headless. He brought General Eisenhower to Washington to act as a kind of temporary chairman. He sought to get rid of Admiral Leahy. Leahy was the President's Chief of Staff, who, as fourth wheel, made the Joint Chiefs tick when they did tick. He could, because he was not congealed in any particular service, though he was as Navy as they come. Forrestal's trouble in this respect was that Leahy was relatively bow-and-arrow, refusing to acknowledge that warfare had become scientific murder, let alone that we are living in an atomic age. But the President had not the heart for a long time to agree with Forrestal's belief that there was no place any longer for a personal chief of staff.

So Forrestal backed the Eighty-first Congress's Tydings bill, passed unanimously in the Senate in honor of Forrestal, but locked in the House Armed Services Committee because its chairman Carl Vinson of Georgia is more blue water than any tradition-bound admiral. Forrestal respected Vinson, but often wondered how people's heads could stay in the nineteenth century while their feet were in the twentieth. The Tydings bill would equip the Secretary of Defense with all the organizational paraphernalia that Forrestal lacked. But by this time Forrestal was a most frustrated man.

Frustration was a new experience for Forrestal. From youth onward he never had known any setback in his quickstep up the ladder to position and fortune. He started with none of the advantages which many of his future colleagues possessed in their early lives. He worked his way through Princeton. He played with the rich, as much out of a restless feeling that he should miss nothing as out of need for aid in his consuming passion to succeed. His restlessness gave him a staccato quality in everything he did—in his short laughter, in his half-run over the golf course, in his swift progress through a dinner or reception. Social graces were waste. Time could not be spent in such trivia when there was so much to do and so short a space to do it in.

After college, Forrestal won his way to a partnership in the investment-banking firm of Dillon, Read by his astonishing facility for selling bonds. He wound up in the presidency. It was more economical to give him promotions than to give him commissions. He worked as hard as he played. Yet the conundrum to his friends was the manner in which he found time, and the reason that he found it, to stuff himself with book reading. He read everything, past and present. He read into the night. Reading was an obsession with him. He did not read systematically, or, as Lord Morley put it, with the aid of a pencil. He absorbed what he read, but he had little book talk, except in an odd story or two or a



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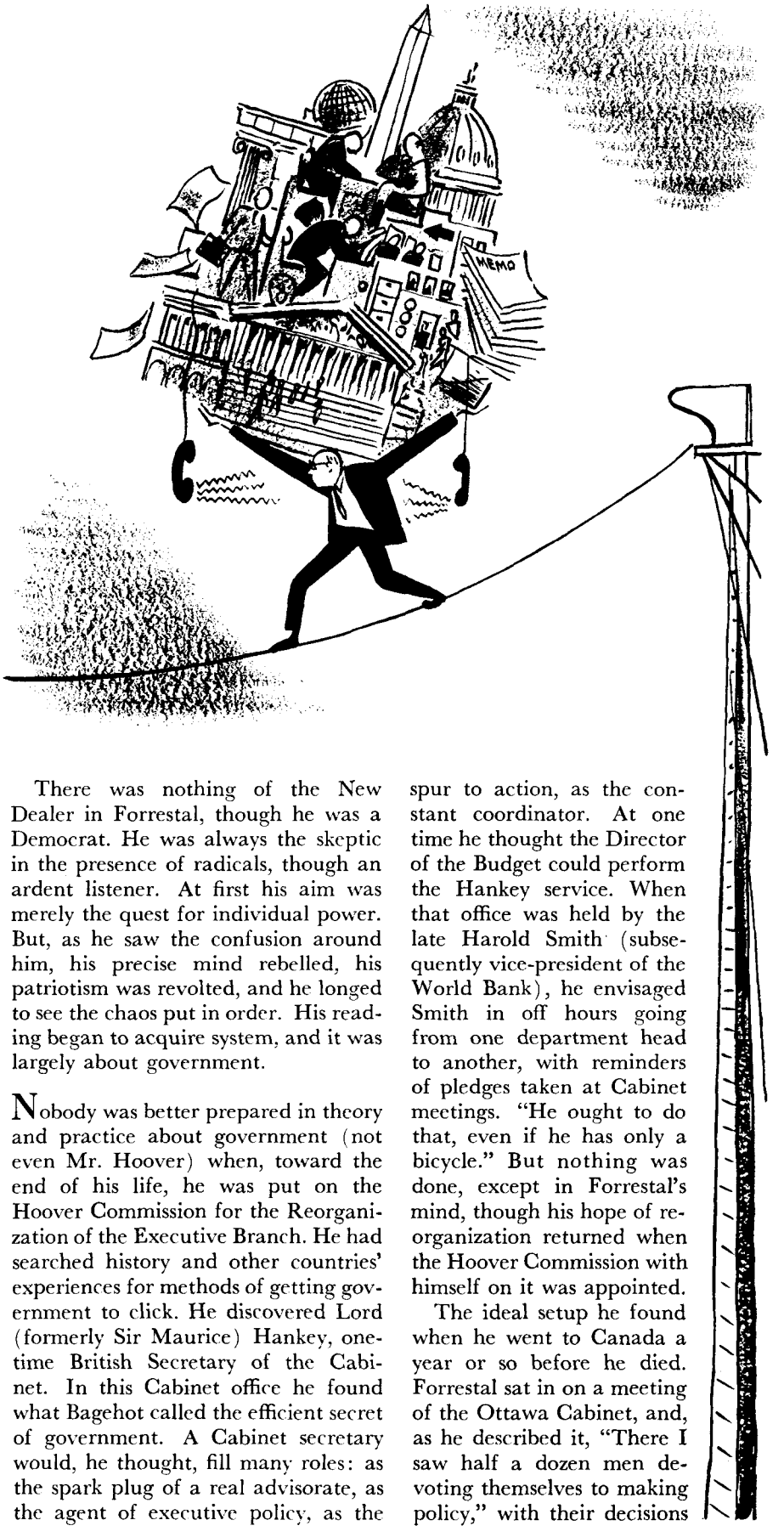
quotation in conversation. An apt quotation in another person's talk would engage his eager interest. He would want often to borrow the book it came from. Forrestal was an anthologist of life.

Deep down, I feel, people were just so many books for Forrestal. He sought both on an identical principle—that they had something to give him. So he appeared to the world to be the most gregarious of men. He made friends with equal ease and curiosity among the Long Island set and the Greenwich Villagers. Once he said of his diversity of interests: "The FBI file about me must be very interesting." But he never lingered, he never stayed, he never seemed to give. Always, there was the eagerness to collect, and in the end, taking the shortest route, he was frantically seeking in an anthology the mystery of life and death on the very eve of suicide.

In this period of Forrestal's life there seemed to be no formulation of beliefs on the basis of his reading or his friendships. Brought up a Roman Catholic, he used to call himself a renegade, especially when a fan mentioned the Presidency as the final prospect of his public career. He wanted money and power, and he had the sure touch to amass the one, and the knack of getting the other. Worldly wise and shrewd, he was one of the few Wall Streeters who rode out of the great depression of the early 1930's with little damage to his pocketbook.

Here was the first great change in the rushed and crowded and spectacular life of Forrestal's. Before the depression was over he realized that the center of power had shifted from Wall Street to Washington. He saw that the people at last insisted that big government was the only answer to big business. The financial district lost its glamor, seemed drab and tame. The banks of the Potomac attracted him more than the banks of New York.

His chance came when war prospects put the New Deal into cold storage. Franklin D. Roosevelt began to recruit the men in top posts in the Wall Street firms he had clipped. Morgan's was tapped, and Dillon, Read could not be passed over. Into public life there began a new migration bent on readying for war, and Forrestal was in the van as one of F.D.R.'s assistants "with a passion for anonymity."



There was nothing of the New Dealer in Forrestal, though he was a Democrat. He was always the skeptic in the presence of radicals, though an ardent listener. At first his aim was merely the quest for individual power. But, as he saw the confusion around him, his precise mind rebelled, his patriotism was revolted, and he longed to see the chaos put in order. His reading began to acquire system, and it was largely about government.

Nobody was better prepared in theory and practice about government (not even Mr. Hoover) when, toward the end of his life, he was put on the Hoover Commission for the Reorganization of the Executive Branch. He had searched history and other countries' experiences for methods of getting government to click. He discovered Lord (formerly Sir Maurice) Hankey, one-time British Secretary of the Cabinet. In this Cabinet office he found what Bagehot called the efficient secret of government. A Cabinet secretary would, he thought, fill many roles: as the spark plug of a real advisorate, as the agent of executive policy, as the spur to action, as the constant coordinator. At one time he thought the Director of the Budget could perform the Hankey service. When that office was held by the late Harold Smith (subsequently vice-president of the World Bank), he envisaged Smith in off hours going from one department head to another, with reminders of pledges taken at Cabinet meetings. "He ought to do that, even if he has only a bicycle." But nothing was done, except in Forrestal's mind, though his hope of reorganization returned when the Hoover Commission with himself on it was appointed.

The ideal setup he found when he went to Canada a year or so before he died. Forrestal sat in on a meeting of the Ottawa Cabinet, and, as he described it, "There I saw half a dozen men devoting themselves to making policy," with their decisions

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governing all down the line. The contrast with his own country was startling. In every place but the Cabinet, decisions were made, and they were reported haphazardly to the parties concerned—sometimes in an odd answer to a question at the President's press conference. Forrestal's neat mind was irked by the traditional sloppiness of executive administration.

It is said that Forrestal was the victim of an eight-year spell of overwork. He certainly did overwork, but not until he became Secretary of Defense. At the Navy, even as wartime Secretary, he had a relatively light burden. The real responsibility was shouldered by Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations. Between King and Forrestal there was understanding. Forrestal loved the Navy, and respected the redoubtable King, a man who prided himself on the hates he inspired and the toughness of his makeup.

King is not anything like so well-known as General Marshall, but he has a touch of greatness, even of inspiration. Forrestal used to say that for one decision alone King was entitled to a place in history. This was the decision, achieved almost over MacArthur's dead body, to make a stand at Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942. A day later, and the Japanese would have cut the South Pacific supply route and perhaps captured Australia. Rabaul instead of Guadalcanal, as MacArthur insisted, would have been a Waterloo for America. Forrestal believed this. He stuck to King, letting King stay in front and run the Navy, and this is the point in the Forrestal-King relations.

Admiral King paid the price of *his* overwork by a complete breakdown after the war was over. He was near Forrestal at the Bethesda Naval Hospital when Forrestal committed suicide. King was making a rapid recovery from a collapse that had robbed him temporarily of his voice. He was writing his memoirs.

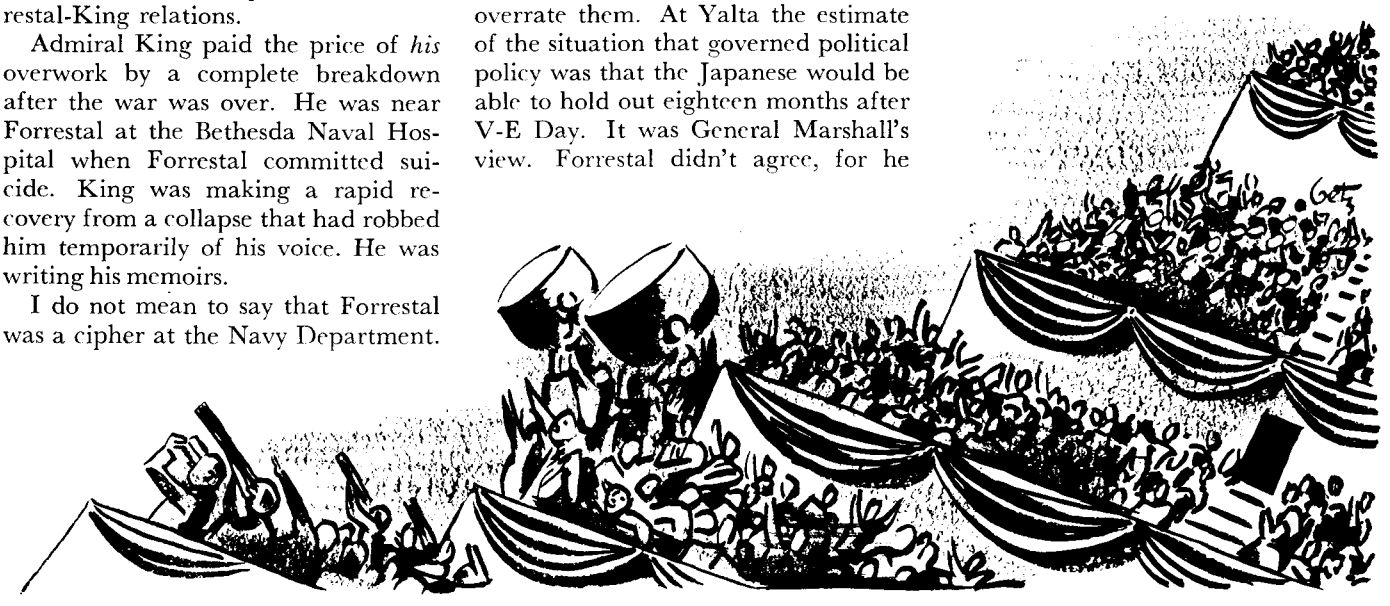
I do not mean to say that Forrestal was a cipher at the Navy Department. By no means. He could ride roughshod over antideluvian admirals when his Irish was up, though this was rare and his interventions were infrequent. Nor did they have anything to do with the sacred cows of the Navy.

However, on several occasions he prevented a persecution. One case was that of Captain (now Admiral) Ellis Zacharias, the imaginative head of the Office of Naval Intelligence. Zacharias was the greatest expert on Japan that the Navy had produced. First naval attaché to Tokyo, he mastered the language, cultivated the people, and at one time served as aide to the Emperor's brother when he came to America. He knew the men who were waging war against America, their ideas, their antecedents, their failings. With Forrestal back of him, he went on the air and waged a superb psychological offensive against Japan's leaders, much to the disgust of the old-line admirals.

This story is told in Zacharias's *Secret Missions*. When the book was in the press there was an immense to-do in the Navy Department, and Zacharias's chiefs called him on the carpet. They tried to stop publication and, it is said, even to cashier Zacharias. Both would have been done but for the swift way Forrestal moved in and took charge of the naval inquiry.

Forrestal profited a good deal from Zacharias's profound knowledge when the war in the Pacific was in its culmination stage. It is often said that the big mistake in this war was first to underrate the Japanese and then to overrate them. At Yalta the estimate of the situation that governed political policy was that the Japanese would be able to hold out eighteen months after V-E Day. It was General Marshall's view. Forrestal didn't agree, for he knew what the naval blockade was doing to Japan, and he felt that Japan could be brought to surrender quickly by wise political warfare on top of the blockade and the existing air attack. Neither Forrestal nor the Navy heads appeared to believe that the atom bomb was either necessary or expedient. Leahy, indeed, has never ceased to disown it. As to the scientists, Forrestal thought their postwar preoccupation with politics was due to their atomic guilt complex. Certainly, the casuistry in Stimson's postwar apologia for Hiroshima and Nagasaki seemed, in my recollection, to be without benefit of the support either of Forrestal or the Navy.

The crucial decision in political warfare against Japan was to let the Japanese keep their Emperor. During one of many conversations I had with Forrestal in these historic days he voiced views on peace which often came to my thoughts when his mental powers became impaired. We had been talking about the way total war frustrates peacemaking. Both of us had just read the account of Lord Lansdowne's ineffective crusade in England in 1916 to get a negotiated peace with Germany. Forrestal mused: "What, I wonder, would the world have been like today if Lord Lansdowne had succeeded? It doesn't seem to occur to us that we must live together after the whole mess is over. I suppose we ought to have realized that when we were trying one method after another to pulverize Germany. If one thing



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didn't work, we tried another. We didn't think over how to get victory economically, let alone what we would have to cope with after the war. Lansdowne had a point, but in the heat of warmaking, such men are called traitors. If we are committed to bitter-end stuff, let us try to be sensible in making peace. Hirohito reminds me of what Bevin said to me the other day. He said, 'If only we had kept the Kaiser after the last war, we might have been spared Hitler and his horrors.' That might be pertinent to the argument about Hirohito. But there is the immediate reason for keeping Hirohito, and that is that the Japanese are thoroughly licked, and we would risk a bloodbath for our boys if we didn't keep him, and it would be totally unnecessary."

Forrestal appeared to feel that the Japanese would be fighting somewhere still if the United States had not qualified the unconditional-surrender formula by pledging retention of Hirohito. At any rate, he was a tower of strength to Secretary Byrnes during the final exchanges through the Swiss intermediaries.

Forrestal came out of the war with his stamina unimpaired, ready to take his part in the exhilarating task of making the peace. He never shared the illusion about Soviet Russia. No man could have been more deeply offended by the decision to buy Russian participation against Japan. He struggled ineffectually against "demobilization by demoralization" after V-E Day. To what extent he made his voice heard in these debates is unclear. He had a dislike for sticking his neck out.

But circumstances compelled him to take a lead when he became Secretary of Defense. As such he was a member of the National Security Council under the system for coordinating foreign policy and defense in the pioneer Unification Act. The council loomed into importance when peace slipped quickly into nerve war. Forrestal became a key policymaker of the United States.

As such, for the first time he found himself under public scrutiny. And he had no taste for being a cynosure. Back in his old Wall Street days he had said his hobby was "obscurity," and had even refused to supply personal data to *Who's Who*. But he had a sense of responsibility that was unique, a patriotism that was unimpeachable. Probably he knew far more about the conditions of national defense than anybody else did, and he did not like them. What alarmed him was the chance with Soviet Russia that the diplomatic arm was taking in foreign relations. The stand on Palestine gave him his first great fright.

The rumor since he died that he was anti-Semitic is fantastic. Remember how he went to bat for Zacharias, himself a Jew, and the fact that his legal counsellor was a Jew, Marx Leva. An essentially simple man, Forrestal either liked people or he didn't, and, if he had any phobia in his personal relations, it was for "stuffy" people. That sometimes seemed to be his only yardstick in his personal relations with those around him in Washington.

When Forrestal thought of Palestine, he thought of the national defense. He assembled around him, as was his wont, all the expert advice that he could mobilize. There were missionary educators from Beirut, and oil men from ARAMCO in Saudi Arabia. Their information confirmed him in his fear that the Arabs would drive the Jews into the Mediterranean and that the United States would then lose its Middle Eastern oil to Russia. On both counts America would be militarily involved. This was a fixed idea—a remarkable change in intellectual attitude in a man who had read and pondered so deeply that he always listened to and saw both sides of many questions. He took his myth on Palestine to the National Security Council.

There can be no doubt, in my opinion, that he was in part responsible for the backing and filling and flipflops on policy which almost made American diplomacy a laughing stock.

Unfortunately, his honest difference of opinion was widely misinterpreted. And the opposition to Forrestal preyed on his mind until he got the hallucination of persecution. He felt wronged. And his paranoid self-torture became worse when he realized he had been misguided. With rare integrity he acknowledged error.

Those who heard his private confession that he had had a wrong steer on Palestine were more disturbed, however, than pleased. For there was an agitation in Forrestal's manner that alarmed. Nor did he regain the poise that might have been expected from his avowal. He felt that though the Russians hadn't moved in the Middle East, they would move somewhere else at any moment. And he was responsible for the American defense! A corroding miasma of impotence and failure enveloped him. He got little sleep thinking about invasion, about American unpreparedness, and what he could do about everything.

It has been said that if the military were in charge, they would fortify the moon. Forrestal became a moon-fortifier. He associated with calamity-howlers. He would say, with a kind of enigmatic darkness, "So-and-so has something." Did he believe in a preventive war? Surely not when he was well. He used to say to extremists, "And when we see what a mess we have made with Germany, what would you do with a beaten Russia?"

But in later days my uncertainty grew. The closest Forrestal got to a preventive-war position in my conversations with him was his expressed feeling that Churchill held it. After Churchill's Boston speech I said this was clearly disproof of any such view, but he seemed unconvinced. In calm moments he would say that a military budget beyond fifteen billion dollars would turn the country into a garrison state; in irrational moments he would talk up to double the sum. In short, he was slipping into that worst of all personal tragedies when doubt and self-doubt are in control.

Now we are within six months of Forrestal's death. In this condition he became affected by adverse comment about him on the air and in the newspapers. Forrestal since he came to high office had been singularly selfless. He was not in the slightest guided by his attachment to big business *per se*.

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Rather he grew relatively poor in public life, and gave no thought to what remained of the money he had earned and saved. In the old days he would have borne criticism without flinching, but in his state of health it hurt. It is untrue, for instance, that he played politics with Governor Dewey.

The fact is that Forrestal had become a dedicated man when the attacks started—a too-dedicated man for his own sanity. He had come to identify himself with the world's sorrows, with America's vulnerability. The woes of this unhappy planet burned into his fevered mind, pressed upon his troubled spirit, and fell like hammer blows upon his disenchanted head. He lived with them, slept with them, and died with them.

However, it would be a complete falsification to say Forrestal had a hostile press. Indeed, the newspapers remained friendly till the day of his death. An example was the gallery of thumbnail sketches of the Cabinet members appearing early this year in a national magazine. Forrestal had by far the best notice. The worst was for Secretary Krug. As for the Roosevelt entourage, think of the mud thrown at Harold Ickes and Frances Perkins, not to mention Mrs. Roosevelt.

By this time a sense of values in the matter of criticism of public men has probably reasserted itself. Some of the comment now looks foolish. One commentator thought that censorship of the press was warranted by the criticism of Secretary Forrestal. I am sure the true Forrestal would have been the first to disagree. If he had been asked what he most wanted to be, I feel he would have said a newspaperman. He served on a paper himself in upstate New York in his youth. He aspired to own a newspaper. He liked the society of newspapermen, read newspapers with the avidity of a Will Rogers. And the liking was reciprocal. Newspapermen had a great regard for Forrestal because he was a straight shooter, a man without guile; and both qualities made him unique in the atmosphere of disingenuousness which enshrouds Washington. He often said that the corrective influence of the newspapers was the safeguard of good and responsible public performance. He always linked newspapers and reorganization in his zeal for efficiency.

It is not protection from the press that should be thrown around our public men. It is protection of themselves and of society while they are in the public employ. The burden that our top-flight administrators are carrying in these great days is uniquely onerous. Good taste dictates charity and understanding, but the very function of a newspaper requires that public men be kept under a sharp eye by those who profess to be the watchdogs of the people.

Mr. Truman as well as the erring commentators came in for censure in the aftermath of blame about Forrestal. The fact is that the President knew only too well that Forrestal had turned unfit for public office. Yet he did not fire him for unfitness. Forrestal resigned. And he had made it plain he would resign after the election. His friends had long urged this course upon him. If the President wanted the job for one of his own intimates, what is wrong with that in a party system of government, provided the appointee is not a duffer? Mr. Truman was sincere when he wined and dined and decorated the resigned Forrestal.

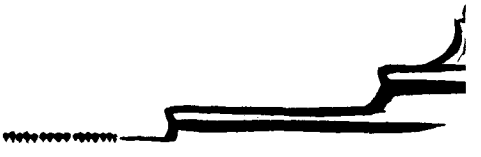
The moral about the death of Forrestal is, it seems to me, very simple. We subject our policemen and our military men to periodical examinations by medical officers. If we do this for a cop or a lieutenant, why should we hesitate to do it for office-holders to whom we have entrusted our destinies? From the President down every public officer should have a periodical medical examination so as to guard the community and the person himself from the tragedy that befell James Vincent Forrestal. This should be written into law.

To leave retirement to a person's own inclination is to forget the ego. The story is told of several Supreme Court Justices who, years ago, waited on Justice Grier urging him to quit, on the ground that his usefulness was over. They succeeded. One of the committee, Justice Field, soon after declined in health, and Justice Harlan gently reminded Field of what he had done about Grier. "I remember him," fired back the ailing Field, "and a dirtier day's job I never did in my life." Charles Evans Hughes, one of the great men in American history who felt more than adequate to his public tasks, left the Supreme Court at seventy-nine. By ordinary standards he was keen and far from incapacitated. But he felt he could no longer keep up the high standards of the Chief Justiceship, and would have been the first, I suggest, to agree to enforced medical examination. Men like Mr. Hughes happen at long intervals; the generality of office-holders cling to preferment.

Take the Presidency and Congress, and history is full of men grown decrepit and disabled for public service. There is no need nowadays to recount the case of President Wilson and the jeopardy into which his lingering illness put the country. It is all in the record. The case of President Roosevelt has still to be written.

When one thinks of the awesome trust we repose in the President, the reckless disregard of the President's condition is enough to make one shudder over the American future. An independent medical examination at stated intervals is imperative. To be

sure, it has been said that God watches over the United States and drunken sailors. But God looks after those who look after themselves. A present case in point is Congress. Congress is run by aged committee chairmen in or near their eighties. The Eighty-first Congress has been in a state of hopeless drift as a result of the death-like grip of old men. It is positively dangerous to let any of our public men, in these hair-trigger days, go to pieces in their devotion to duty in the manner that Forrestal did. —HERBERT ELLISTON



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The Making of a Saint?

Two men are following the trail of the Franciscan Father Serra—the Vice-Postulator and his opponent, the 'Devil's Advocate'

The sense of time past is very strong in Father Eric O'Brien. He lives in California and is on a medieval errand there. Since 1941, this brisk, amiable, and powerfully built Franciscan priest has been retracing the trail and inquiring deeply into the spiritual qualities of another Franciscan, Padre Junipero Serra, who died in Carmel in 1784 after founding the first nine of California's twenty-one missions. Father O'Brien's purpose is to convince the hierarchy of the Catholic Church that Father Serra should be made a saint.

Such a mission, despite the great fame of Father Serra and the zeal and efficiency with which Father O'Brien has promoted his cause, is difficult in the extreme. Father O'Brien has been at it for eight years. The Church will not elevate anyone to sainthood without putting up the most formidable opposition—lest it turn out later that the candidate had been something less than saintly. The pattern of this opposition was worked out centuries ago in canon law. Under it, Father Serra's basic virtue must measure up. Every move in the canonization process must be formal; every claim made for or against Father Serra must be subjected to the most stringent review in California and Rome.

To oppose the cause of Fathers Serra and O'Brien, the Church has appointed one of its legal experts as a kind of prosecutor—a priest known officially as Promoter of the Faith and popularly as the Devil's Advocate, or D.A., whose duty it is to accentuate the negative all the way down the line. He travels around California in Father O'Brien's wake, amassing information about Father Serra's failings. If such anti-Serra information exists, the Church will certainly use it against him—just as it is using similar information against the hundreds of other candidates for sainthood whose causes are now pending.

If Father O'Brien wins out, Father Serra will become California's first saint and the United States' second (Mother Cabrini is the first). Father O'Brien at thirty-six has considerable earnestness and dash, as well as a thorough conviction of Father Serra's excellence. He was born in California, joined the Franciscans in 1928, and took over the directorship of Father Serra's cause, a post known as Vice-Postulator, in 1941. Father O'Brien did not propose the canonization of Father Serra to Rome; his superiors did that in 1934. Still, when Rome agreed to the trial and asked who should be the Vice-Postulator, Father O'Brien's name was immediately suggested, for he had long been a student of Serra's life.

At first, Father O'Brien proceeded slowly; his early method was simply to seek out and question witnesses. As he got the feel of the work, his sense of time present came to equal his sense of time past, and he branched out into local radio, newspaper, and person-to-person promotion of the cause. An acute sense of time present is of utmost importance to Father O'Brien, because promotion of the cause of Father Serra in this age requires use of the most enlightened business methods, not to mention publicity techniques verging, at times, on out-and-out press agentry. The Franciscans furnished Father O'Brien with an expense account, one publicity assistant, three research assistants, and transportation. They relieved him of all of his other duties (teaching Latin, Greek, Spanish, and English), and wished him Godspeed.

In the next couple of years, Father O'Brien and his associates traveled some 200,000 miles, poking into the remoter archives and corners of the West. They tracked down and questioned some 150 witnesses, most of them in California, and built up a file of over 7,500 Serra documents that are the envy of movie producers and historians. Father O'Brien has crowded half a dozen filing cabinets into his room in the old Santa Barbara Mission, set up a cross-filing system with key cards, and broken Father Serra's life down into departments in the corporation style. The headings of these departments are Patience, Prudence, Fortitude, Charity, and so on, on the credit side, and Temper, Impatience, Jealousy, and so on, on the debit.

It was not until Father O'Brien had been at work for four years on his cause that a Devil's Advocate was named. The D.A. chosen was Father Lucien Arvin, a Franciscan missionary and expert on canon law, who happened to be in San Francisco on an interim assignment. Father Arvin, a cultivated Frenchman who physically resembles Charles Boyer, joined the Franciscans after serving in the French Army in the First World War, and has spent most of his time in the Far East. He has found life in California, and especially his warm friendship with Father O'Brien, very pleasing, but this has not weakened his determination to keep Father Serra out of the ranks of the saints, if legally possible.

His principal task is to examine the witnesses Father O'Brien turns up. This is done secretly, before local ec-

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clesiastical judges, in the handiest church. Before the hearings, Father O'Brien briefs his witnesses on the points to be made before the court. Father O'Brien is not admitted to the hearings. When the examination begins, he can only pace the halls outside and pray that the witnesses will stick to their stories under Father Arvin's astute and indefatigable quizzing.

Despite Father O'Brien's prayers, unfortunately, there have been times when accounts of Father Serra's virtues have broken down under fire. This has been inevitable, for Father Serra lived long ago, in a wild and romantic time, and the stories about him have become legendary.

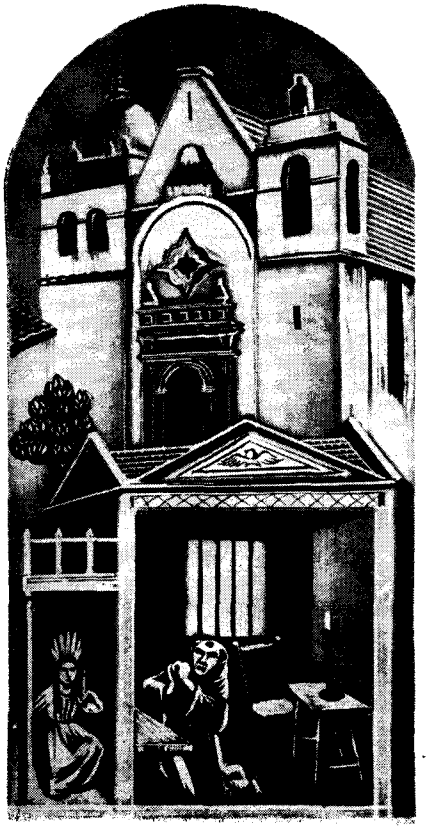
Father Serra was a swarthy and mettlesome man, by all accounts, with a strong will. He was born on the Island of Majorca, off the east coast of Spain, in 1713, and was so beset with boyhood illnesses that his growth was retarded and the Franciscans at first refused to accept him. But young Serra had made up his mind; he was ordained and began to preach explosive sermons. To lend emphasis, he sometimes beat his breast with sharp rocks. Life in the Spanish friary was rewarding and secure, but Father Serra forsook it in 1749 and set out to plant, harvest, carry hod, and teach the sun-worshipping Pame Indians in the fever-ridden Sierra Gorda in Mexico the way of God. He spent twenty years at this work.

In the popular mind, and much park statuary, Father Serra, "the founder of California," is a man of heroic size and noble mien. Actually, he was thin, sharp-featured in the Spanish way, and so short that he had to get on tiptoes to help the Indian braves carry logs. His courage, resourcefulness, and purpose would have been remarkable in any age. When the Spanish politicos of Alta California called for colonizing help from the Church, Father Serra, now middle-aged, volunteered and was put in charge of the expedition north. Part of the force left by ship, but the section that Father Serra was in set out on foot and arrived in San Diego after months of abrasive travel over some of the worst country in the world. A mosquito bite on Father Serra's leg had become badly ulcerated, so that walking was a torture. Still, he walked the 1,100 miles from Mexico City to San Diego, and continued to walk the trails of California until he had covered a total of some ten thousand miles.

In California, Father Serra directed the building of the missions. He apparently went about this work with such zeal that certain historians have said he was hot-tempered, quarrelsome, and jealous of his power. Father O'Brien has come across accounts that accuse his candidate of fighting with the civil authorities and helping to trick and intimidate the California Indians to keep them in line. Confronted with these statements, Father O'Brien says: "The Church has never maintained that its servants, or even its saints, had no human failings, and we are not trying to prove that Father Serra had none. We simply mean to show that for a long time before his death, he had his impulses under full control, and that whatever he did was in good faith."

It will be much better, of course, if Father O'Brien can prove the historians wrong, for Father Serra's cause is not strong on two other important points—miracles or martyrdom. If a candidate for sainthood has been martyred, the Church is willing to overlook the fact that he may have performed no miracles during his lifetime.

Father Serra is credited officially with no miracles, although Father O'Brien has come across two instances when his candidate acted with seeming miraculous powers. The story is told that on one occasion, when a bear charged into a clearing where Father Serra and some Indians were working,



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he dropped to his knees and began to pray. The bear went away. On the other occasion, Father Serra was aroused from sleep by a group of horsemen who shouted that an old man was dying miles away in the hills. The Padre refused to mount a horse. When he insisted that he walk, the others rode off in anger, thinking him out of his mind, but when they arrived at the old man's house after a swift ride, they beheld Father Serra just emerging from it.

In recent years, other alleged miracles attributable to Father Serra have turned up. In one case, a woman who had an ulcerated leg is said to have prayed to him and to have been cured within a week.

At the moment, Father O'Brien is putting all of his evidence into shape for presentation at the final trial of the cause to be held in Fresno, California, in the fall. By late August, he must have completed an exhaustive brief which will set forth Father Serra's basic virtue in the formal manner required under canon law. It is then that Father Arvin, the Devil's Advocate, will get in his worst licks. If he fails to shake anybody's story, and all else goes well, the testimony and information will be sealed and sent to Rome.

The fact that the cause has got as far as Rome will not mean that Father Serra is practically a saint, of course. The way is still long and hard. If it is decided that there is good cause to proceed further, Rome will appoint another ecclesiastical tribunal in California to undertake more detailed investigations, which will then again be submitted to Rome. Father Serra must first wait years, and be declared "Venerable" and then "Blessed," before he is canonized. Still, if the cause does succeed in getting past California, it will mean that it has much merit, and Father O'Brien and his associates, who have worked so long, will have good reason to hope.

While he pursues the past down the valleys of California, with the Devil's Advocate hard behind and the jet-builders, the industrial farmers, the shippers, movie-makers, and atom-smashers making a great noise all around, Father O'Brien keeps this thought firmly in mind. It is a great stimulus, especially when the present palls, and the future threatens, and the past seems dead indeed.

Hurdles for the FAO

The men are there, the tools are there; all we lack is the will to attack the world food problem

Half the world and roughly two thousand years of progress lie between the handsome eastern Oregon ranch of Norris E. Dodd and the miserable rice paddy of Ahmed Salah in eastern Pakistan. But Dodd, who happens to be Director General of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization, figures that his and Ahmed's problems are inseparable.

The Dodd layout is a nicely balanced operation: two thousand acres of crop land and four hundred head of beef cattle. Dodd uses a new combine, the best fertilizer, certified seed, pest control, and the latest breeding and feeding methods; his problem today is surplus production. Ahmed's tools predate the Christian Era. Barring an unseasonal drought, a blight or plague, he harvests his five-acre crop by hand, runs a herd of goats over it to thresh it, and, if he's lucky, gets barely enough rice to keep himself and his family of seven alive. (His youngest son died of malnutrition last year.) His problem is shortage.

Here, in microcosm, is perhaps the world's most basic economic dilemma. "Surpluses are local," Dodd says. "It will take generations, maybe longer, before the world can grow enough to feed itself properly. The thing that chills me is that my neighbors and I must leave part of our land idle to protect prices and keep ourselves from running in the red when there are so many millions of people needing the extra crops we could raise."

On a world inspection tour, Dodd recently visited Pakistan, where he saw Ahmed's desperately impoverished standard of living first-hand, and how little it would take to raise it. "At least give these people scythes to replace their sickles," he recommended to the eighteen-nation council of the FAO in Paris in June.

In Japan, Dodd watched women thresh rice with a crude wooden drum fitted with staples to beat the kernels from the head. When he mentioned this in India he was besieged with questions about the process. Indian farmers had never heard of anything so modern. In southern Egypt one day he found three men standing in the broiling sun, handing water up a ten-foot embankment in camel-hide bags to irrigate a field. An outboard motor could have pumped more water in an hour than they handled in a full day.

The tantalizing challenge to council delegates was the staggering complications involved in achieving the simplest results. A sack of grass seed or a galvanized-iron pail might mean the difference between desolation and human decency to a Greek peasant or a Persian villager, but the process of delivery involves international credits, tariffs, and other items in which governments become so jealously enmeshed. Delegates knew that any effort to inject an operative punch into President Truman's proposal to aid under-developed areas would have to deal realistically not only with production and consumption but also with the technicalities lying between them.

To put it another way, the basic issue bedevilling the council was how to effect the deceptively simple-sounding aim of "expanding world economy"—not self-sufficiency in a nationalistic sense but full production, fully distributed.

The French delegation cautioned the

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FAO not to be fooled by isolated surpluses (sugars, grains, and fats, for instance) into thinking the world was passing from scarcity to plenty. True, world food production has reached about 90 per cent of prewar levels—but those levels were insufficient to satisfy mankind's minimum needs and now, with population swelling, there are more mouths to feed than ever.

France requested a new detailed appraisal of the world food situation, not only as to production, markets, and exchange difficulties, but stocks available in each country down to the last sack of flour and how much of it each consumer gets. It urged the FAO, meanwhile, to oppose any slackening of food production anywhere.

In outline, the food picture had already been clearly drawn. Britain's Sir Herbert Broadley, Deputy Director General of the FAO, reported that if minimum nutritional targets are to be met by 1960, in pace with the population spiral, the world cereal crop must be increased 21 per cent over prewar, meat production 46 per cent, milk 100 per cent, and fruit and vegetable supplies by 163 per cent. Director General Dodd warned that except for Siam, Burma, and Indo-China (which have rice surpluses), the rice-consuming peoples of the East and Far East "are generally worse off than ever before." India was able to get only about half of its five-million-ton food import requirements last year.

Ironically, American farmers were already beginning to cut back grain acreage, stockmen were reducing herds; Cuba, for one, was tightening cane-sugar production, and various world sources of fats and oils were being restricted by the fear of non-salable surpluses.

One way to tackle the dilemma of surpluses, studied by the council in Paris, would be to create a special body to inventory and allocate them to deficient areas, a sort of International Emergency Food Committee in reverse. In the chaotic postwar months of 1946, amid widespread famine threats heightened by crop failures and delays in UNRRA food distribution, the IEFC took over from the Combined Food Board to deal with shortages and distribute meager world stocks on a need-priority basis. Representing more than thirty countries, it did a brilliant job, but now it is going out of business. Its demise was hastened by both politics and the weather—the impatience of governments to rid the voters of rationing, and better harvests. What more logical move than to replace IEFC with a commodity-surplus committee?

The recently concluded international wheat agreement suggested a precedent, even though it represented only a tiny step in the right direction and might conceivably be wrecked by Russia or Argentina if they choose to dump stocks on the market. (These two nations not only refused to sign the wheat agreement, but they are the only two major UN countries which don't belong to the FAO.)

Under the four-year wheat pact, the U. S., Canada, and Australia—plus France and Uruguay with minor quotas—will undertake to deliver to thirty-six importing countries 456 million bushels of wheat a year at a minimum buying price ranging from $1.20 to $1.50, and a maximum selling price of $1.80. The American allotment is 168 million bushels, far less than half of U. S. 1948 wheat exports.

What would happen to any additional surplus not absorbed by the agreement? One possible solution to that, for wheat or any other commodity under international control, is a two-price system. Once a nation met its commitments at the established price, it would be free to hunt a buyer for leftover surpluses at a price outside the agreement, providing the buyer came up with a definite plan to utilize the commodity for the public good—say in school lunch programs or in reduced flour prices to low-income groups. This would by no means fully solve the shortage-surplus problem but it would do far more toward steadying markets than leaving them with no controls at all. As one FAO report said, "the best-laid plans for the development of agriculture can be defeated by instability of prices." Norris Dodd himself strongly backs the plan. "Growers," he says, "will get at least something for their additional surpluses, which may mean the difference between profit and loss, and at the other end of the line the fellow who needs it will get the food."

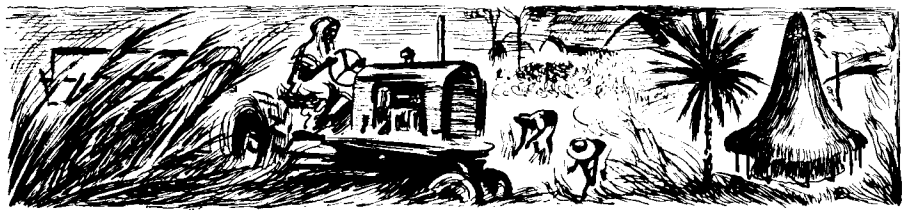
Carefully larding with qualifications its endorsement of the idea of international commodity agreements, Britain definitely balked at the two-price system. "The burden of it," the British argument ran, in effect, "falls on us. We are still the world's largest buyers of imported food. If we agree to buy at one price in a long-term agreement giving a producer an assured return, and then he sells additional stocks elsewhere at a lower one, we are actually financing that transaction." An impressive rebuttal to that was the axiom that if a farmer cannot, one way or another, get rid of his crop, he will cut his production—then neither Britain nor the under-developed areas will get the supplies they need.

Whatever the answer to the commodity-control riddle, it became plainer than ever at Paris that the key to any world economic program lay in Washington, not only regarding the methods and projects themselves to be adopted, but also the manner of financing them.

"Indeed," Sir Herbert Broadley declaimed, "so long as the U.S.A. has an exportable surplus, on top of a high average standard of living, of almost all commodities—agricultural and industrial alike—the world's dollar shortage will continue and other countries with lower standards of living continue to be unable to purchase the whole of the U.S.A.'s abundant supplies.

"One vital element in the situation is this: What is the long-term policy of the U.S.A. in regard to its own trade disequilibrium? The world can take North American supplies only if North America will accept goods and services in return." Sir Herbert suggested that the solution might be found in a long-term investment policy on the part of the U.S.A. and the planning of its production in such a way as to allow debtors to repay loans in goods and services.

Before every council session rose



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the specter of unbridled population growth. (The inhabitants of the planet are currently multiplying at the rate of twenty million a year—fifty-four thousand a day.) But to skeptics who claim the world can never be adequately fed, the FAO answered, "we never have really tried."

"FAO emphatically disassociates itself from the grim forebodings of such neo-Malthusians as Aldous Huxley, William Vogt, and Fairfield Osborn," Broadley declared. "It believes that the world can provide the food needed to feed its present teeming millions, but also for many millions more."

To do that will require not only measures to expand production but swift steps to conserve what known resources we have. It is painfully true that the world's riches are being destroyed by erosion, pillage, and waste. Synthetic nourishment for untold millions may eventually be produced from the sea, but an algae sandwich and a plankton steak are not yet available in restaurants. Collaborating with other UN agencies on how technical assistance can help produce the global development President Truman wants, FAO experts have devised a plan containing fifty-seven concrete proposals by which the world supply situation, particularly food, can be improved, beginning almost immediately:

Item—Weevils, mites, and rodents destroy about sixty million tons of grain a year—more than three times the annual U. S. grain exports. At an initial cost of $85,710, a pest- and disease-control program in crops could be started to save this staggering loss.

Item—Rinderpest, the major livestock disease in Africa, Asia, and the Far East, kills two million cattle a year. Scientists say the proper application of known vaccine could eradicate rinderpest within ten years. In Czechoslovakia last year, 1.5 million pigs died of Teschen disease. Control measures could keep the disease—supposedly related vaguely to infantile paralysis—from spreading while a search for a cure is speeded.

Item—Experts calculate world livestock production could be expanded 25 per cent in ten years if modern breeding methods were commonly adopted. In some areas, livestock products could be increased 50 per cent by better feeding. Poultry production could be doubled—a vital factor in the Far East where poultry furnishes what little animal protein is contained in the diet. It would take about $250,000 to get such improvements under way.

Item—In hybrid-corn areas of the U. S., yields have increased 20 per cent. If Europe could get equal increases, the continent's coarse-grain imports could be slashed by one-third. It is estimated that if the best seed rice now available were widely used, harvests could be easily increased by ten per cent—more food for millions in Asia.

Item—About three-quarters of the world's annual timber cut is wasted. "A judicious combination of modern forest industries" should make it possible to reduce this waste to a fifth or even a tenth of the cut. This means lumber production could be greatly increased without raising the annual depletion of forests.

If all fifty-seven projects in this simple but supercharged technical assistance plan were undertaken, the cost to the FAO for the first year, above its $4,600,000 operating budget, would be $9,425,456—roughly equivalent to the American share of the cost of the Berlin air lift for three weeks.

The FAO council amassed a high pile of plans to submit to the Havana conference, ranging from technical assistance to the monstrously involved schemes on commodity controls, international trade and finance. On paper they shone with promise. But the delegates worked in an air of frustration. Theoretically nobody was better equipped than they to prime the engine of expanding economy and get things moving. Actually, they could only draw blueprints of the machine and recommend to the UN and their respective governments how it should operate. Like all UN special agencies, the FAO has no executive power. "We haven't the authority to move a pound of butter across the street," one delegate remarked bitterly.

"All we've got," Director General Dodd admitted, "is the power of mental and moral suasion. We can only do what national governments decide to let us do." Rarely in history have governments voluntarily composed their differences for the common good. One Paris observer put it this way: "Unless the pressure of the economic emergency is great enough to convince nations that the only alternative to an orderly and expanding world economy is war, outfits like the FAO might as well strike their tents and steal away."

There is evidence, however, that the FAO is making more effective use of its limited persuasive powers than is generally known. The main purpose of Dodd's detour to the remote village of Sylet in eastern Pakistan, where Ahmed Salah lives, was to witness the demonstration of a four-inch centrifugal irrigation pump, arranged by the FAO and the Pakistan government. The occasion was made a fête day. The whole countryside, more than two thousand men, women and children, turned out. They stared in wonder at the pump. They not only had never seen such a thing before, they never had known anything like it existed. Now it would be permanently installed at Sylet to irrigate, by itself, six hundred acres—more than a hundred of their farms, Ahmed's included. Other farmers stormed government officials shouting demands for pumps. It was a great day in Sylet.

What would be the sequel? Six hundred acres would now be made available for other crops besides rice. Eventually this additional production could allow the government to pare its food-import budget. On the strength of that, the government could finance the purchase of more pumps and furnish them to farmers on credit against their crops.

"One of these days," Dodd chuckled, "if all goes well, some pump factories somewhere will be getting the damndest bunch of orders they ever saw."

—EDWARD P. MORGAN

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Books

Promised Land of Parity

It is an irony of the times that, although we have the most elaborate news and information services in the world, our understanding of one another has not kept pace with our facts and figures. We were rudely reminded of this by the opinion polls last fall. The republic is still vast in area and diversified in interest, and it stands in as great peril of economic sectionalism as it once did of geographic. The modern analogues of the three great geographical sections that nearly tore the Union apart a century ago are business, labor, and argriculture. Public policy must find and promote the national interest in continual compromises among the three, compromises phrased in the language of economics but signifying much the same uneasy balance in the struggle for power as the Missouri Compromise or Clay's Omnibus Bill. It is a formidable task, but we must persist in it. Those earlier measures failed for lack of mutual understanding; we must boldly raise and answer the questions that divide us against ourselves in the economic sectionalism of today.

One of the most baffling of these questions concerns our farmers. What do the four-fifths of us who have forsaken the country for urban life and work know about the one-fifth who live on farms and produce our foodstuffs? From the headlines of recent months we might easily conclude that they are a fortunate, not to say privileged, minority. With food prices more than twice the 1909-1914 average and farm income up from ten billion dollars in 1940 to thirty billion in 1948, they appear to be enjoying their greatest boom in history. Since 1933, moreover, they have been beneficiaries of the most far-reaching system of public education, planning, and economic assistance yet developed here.

In 1940 the budgeted cost of all this public assistance to agriculture—the cost to us as taxpayers—was $1.4 billion—about a tenth of our national food bill. The cost to us as consumers, in the resulting higher prices of food, was incalculable. But both political parties and the major farm organizations were on record in favor of the principle, and Congress had renewed its lease on life in the Agricultural Act of 1948. Now the Secretary of Agriculture has come forward with a scheme of price and income supports designed to keep farm income above its wartime average of $26 billion indefinitely. A rainbow stands over the American farm, formed by a friendly political sun shining through a rain of subsidies. The farmer has come into his own. He has attained the promised land of parity.

But has he? What resemblance does this farmer of the headlines bear to our living fellow citizen? "Agricultural problems in the final analysis usually are human problems," Secretary Brannan wrote in his annual report for 1948, ". . . problems of the 27.5 million people living on farms and trying to make a good living from farming, problems of the rest of the people in this country who depend upon agriculture for food and fiber . . ." In these human terms, of living conditions and basic social opportunities, Mr. Brannan saw "a great disparity between farm people and the nonfarm population." The same disparity had been noted by Theodore Roosevelt in 1908, when he appointed his Country Life Commission, and by virtually every one of Mr. Brannan's predecessors in office from the Taft Administration to the Truman. Fifteen years of subsidies and ten years of war boom have made some farmers rich, but they have by no means brought all our farmers to the rainbow's end.

How far short of it they are—how their lives, institutions, and cultural advantages compare with ours—is clearly depicted in *Rural Life in the United States* (Alfred A. Knopf; $6.75), a survey of our rural society by Dr. Carl Taylor, head of the Department of Agriculture's Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare, and seven other prominent rural sociologists. It is a solid book of thirty chapters, illustrated by many excellent photographs, maps, and charts, and it spreads before us an illuminating panorama of American agriculture.

The text is divided into five parts, the first introductory, the last summing up attitudes, opinions, and trends affecting the relations between rural society and the "great society" of which it is a part. Parts II, III, and IV analyze rural society in terms respectively of its organizations, its population characteristics, and its regional peculiarities. Each of these three main parts is a compendium of special studies dealing with such subjects as family and home, neighborhoods and communities, villages, education, religion, local government, health, welfare, and art; with population dynamics, occupational patterns, landowners and tenants, farm laborers, and living standards; and with the distinctive cultures of the cotton, corn, wheat, cattle, dairy, and other regions. The authors' purpose was to present "an accurate description . . . based on . . . careful and repeated observations" that would "help people understand themselves and lead to an improvement in living conditions." They expect no more of their text than that it be used in classrooms, to which its profuseness may confine it. If so, the more's the pity. For it offers what is lacking in the calculus of parity prices, to wit, the terms in which we must

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provide equal opportunity to our farmers as human beings.

To be sure, this is a relative judgment. For we learn at the outset that rural-urban differences are less marked here than in any other countries except Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and that "farm people in the United States have the highest level of living, both materially and culturally, of any farmers in the world." It is, moreover, a major theme of the book that the isolation of rural life is lessening at the rate with which automobiles, highways, planes, radios, and television are constantly growing in numbers. This trend is accompanied by the progressive commercialization and mechanization of farming and its closer integration (as a subordinate part) in the national economy. Consistent with both, the farm population is declining, and probably will continue to do so for a good long time. In other words, the disparity that Secretary Brannan complains of is by way of disappearing through the progressive absorption of our rural by our urban civilization. Why not sit tight and let these trends play themselves out? Why bother about parity in the meantime?

There are a hundred answers, many of them obvious in our temperament and our political system. It is not in our nature to let things slide; an aggressive farm bloc, controlling a disproportionately high number of votes in Congress, would not permit it if we tried to. We are committed to action. The question is how to direct this action to the greatest possible advantage of all of us, the majority who are not farmers as well as the minority who are. Though it is not the argument of *Rural Life,* it is the implicit testimony of its pages that the action we have taken to date leaves much unfinished business. To illustrate, let us consider its evidence on population, living standards, and education.

Since 1916, with only a slight interruption during the depression of the early 1930's, our farm population—the people who actually live and work on farms—has been steadily decreasing. In terms of residence, it numbered 27.4 million, or 19.1 per cent of the total population, in 1947, as compared with 31.8 million, or 34.6 per cent, in 1910. In employment the comparable figures were 8.5 million, or 13.9 per cent of the working population, in 1947, and 11.6 million, or 31 per cent, in 1910.

The farm population has not been dying out. It has been migrating into cities and towns and other occupations. It has been doing this because the progressive application of technology to agriculture, of which the tractor is the symbol, has so enormously increased its productivity, both per acre and per worker, that a very much smaller labor force is required to supply the nation's foodstuffs. As it is now, the top third of our farms produces eighty per cent of our agricultural products, the middle third sixteen per cent, and the lowest third only four per cent. The implication of these figures is that by the unlimited application of available techniques we could produce to the limit of our natural resources and our capacity to consume with half our present farm population.

The further implications of the figures are general underemployment in the country; generally lower wages and lower profits—a per-capita net income of $909 as compared with $1,569 for nonfarmers in 1948, meaner living conditions and social opportunities, and a continuous migration to the city in search of better.

The disparity in living standards is remarkable. Farming is popularly conceived (by nonfarmers) to be a way of life that offers peculiar moral and aesthetic compensations for its lower material rewards. Farmers are supposed to "live well." In 1946 two-thirds of them were reported to be inadequately housed, one-third—that is to say, about two million families—in rural slums dilapidated "beyond repair." They are supposed to eat well, yet nutrition studies show half of them living on submarginal diets. They are supposed to be healthy, yet their rate of rejection for physical disability in the Second World War was exceeded only by those of domestic servants and the unemployed.

Part of the explanation of these ironic circumstances lies in the fact that only half as many doctors, dentists, and hospital beds are available proportionately to the rural as to the urban population. Part of it lies in rural America's inferior educational opportunities. Here it is at its greatest disadvantage. For with nearly 50 per cent of the nation's children (thanks to its higher birthrate) to educate, it receives barely 12 per cent of the national income. The average salary of its teachers in 1944 was $1,275 compared to $2,215 in the cities—a crude but accurate index to poorer instruction, narrower curricula, shorter terms, and a general tendency to drop out of school about the age of fourteen. In 1940 twice as many urban as rural men and women in their late twenties had completed high school.

Education, in a democracy, is part of the process of government; Jefferson considered it the most vital part. To him it was democracy's alternative to paternalism and coercion, the means of self-improvement, the key to equal opportunity in our society. The United States Agricultural Extension Service, the most extensive and certainly one of the finest adult vocational education services in the world, is an admirable practical application of that theory. But the soil must be cultivated before planting. The best adult education without sound preparation is seed sown on barren ground.

Since 1933 we have done much to equalize our farmers' opportunities in such fields as credit, cooperative marketing, and, most importantly, soil conservation. But we have left our rural society as a whole still floundering in a fundamental disparity caused by its excessive size relative to its productive capacities, its share of the national income, and its possibilities of gainful employment. We have tried to correct this situation by pegging farm prices at their 1909-1914 parity average, at a cost to the rest of us of billions of dollars in subsidies and higher food prices. The human evidence presented by *Rural Life* proves that we have not succeeded. This evidence shows very clearly the coincidence of inferior education with slums, high birth rates, juvenile delinquency, depressed living standards, bad health, and unemployment.

The powerful import of this is that if we spent on rural education a tithe of the sums we have spent, and contemplate spending, on price subsidies, we would be making a better investment for the long run. For we would be putting our rural people in the way of understanding economic trends, of accomplishing their own economic reallocations, and of attaining a parity that means the same thing to the whole nation. —A. Whitney Griswold

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Reader Contributions

These letters are in response to the theme question: *What are some of the problems in your community or region of which the nation is not aware?*

Nation's Capital

It took an Act of Congress to authorize the removal of stone piers from a street in the District of Columbia.

In this one instance you have an example of the supreme law-making body of the nation busily occupied in meeting, head-on, a typical local issue. Self-government, taken for granted in the rest of the country, is not *an* issue but *the* issue in the nation's capital. Denied the right to vote for President or Congress, the electors here do not even have the right to run themselves.

Is the nation aware of this problem? Only indifferently. Last year in a Gallup Poll, a cross-section of the voters of the country was asked: "People who live in Washington, D. C., do not now have the right to vote for their city officials. Do you think they should or should not be allowed to vote for their local government officials?" The result showed that 77 per cent felt that Washington people should have the right to vote, 13 per cent that they should not, and ten per cent expressed no opinion. By and large, the absence of self-government in the seat of the government has not been the object of the nationwide concern it deserves.

On May 31, 1949, the Senate passed a home-rule bill for the District, but only after voting down an amendment which would prohibit an ordinance changing any law, policy, custom, or rule relating to racial segregation from becoming effective until there had been a referendum on the subject. Here is probably the real reason for Congressional apathy to granting home-rule—the fear that Negroes would improve their position if self-government were to be granted. The Negro population is approximately 28 per cent of the District's, which is smaller than in Richmond, Virginia, now governed under a home-rule plan.

The home-rule bill is now in the House of Representatives. If the rest of the country, fortunate enough to have Representatives, is sufficiently concerned about the government of its capital, and makes that concern articulate, perhaps the District of Columbia may soon attain political maturity.

—Morris Miller

City of Glamor

It is easy to define any source of community complaint as a problem, but regional maladjustments in Los Angeles are so violent many of them have developed their own remedies.

Still uncorrected, however, are certain inadequacies of sanitation and water supply.

Civic committees are sweating over smog, monorail transportation, downtown parking, statehood for Southern California, a new opera house.

These difficulties all grow out of the community's biggest problem—the digestion of an unprecedented chunk of immigrant population. Not since the gold seekers descended on San Francisco a hundred years ago—if one excepts the wartime population shifts of the armed services—has such a swarm of new residents choked the living facilities of any community.

From a population of 576,673 in 1920, Los Angeles reached an estimated 2,100,000 in 1948. If the populations of New York, Chicago, and Philadelphia had grown at the same rate, New York would now be nearly 22,000,000; Chicago 10,000,000 and Philadelphia 7,500,000. This is why the nation as a whole is not aware of the cultural and social, not to say spiritual, lag—even retrogression—that has afflicted this population-crazy area. Material inadequacies of an over-run municipality are obvious and, as stated, largely self-correcting. But you seldom know your next-door neighbor, and visiting cross-town friends is a weekend chore.

People in Los Angeles use all their energy finding jobs and homes, and have little time left for social affairs. Proprietors of "introduction clubs" and "friendship bureaus" find their enterprises as profitable as mortuaries.

One bright spot, possibly the best agent for relieving housebound boredom, is the Los Angeles School District's system of Adult Evening Education. Classes for self improvement range from lampshade-making to general semantics, and attract thousands of "students"—many of them college graduates—who cultivate a hobby, study a language, or learn a new trade.

Many believe this is the community's only chance to find relief from the stifling monotony of mass entertainment.

—William W. Ferguson

Instructions to Reader Contributors

Theme: *Does the consumer benefit from government aid to farmers?*

1. All contributors should state the question to which the letter is in answer.
2. Letters should not exceed four hundred words.
3. Contributors are asked to print name, address, and occupation.
4. Contributions should be addressed to Reader Contributions, *The Reporter*, 220 East 42 Street, New York 17, New York.
5. Contributions to be printed will be selected by The Editors.
6. Each contributor whose letter is printed will receive a check for $25.00.
7. All contributions, whether printed or not, will become the property of *The Reporter*.
8. All contributions on this issue's question must be postmarked not later than July 26, 1949.

Reader contributors are asked to follow instructions carefully in order to avoid confusion between contributions on the theme question and regular Letters to the Editor.

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Letters

To The Reporter

Lift for the Cause

To the Editor:—As the director of the Durham Conference and its keynote speaker, and as a co-founder of the Southern Regional Council which grew out of the Durham Conference, and as an executive committeeman of the council, I say in all frankness and candor that your appraisal of the Southern Regional Council is about the most understanding and penetrating analysis of its methods, motives, and mission it has been my lot to read in the press of the nation. I personally thank you for the lift which I am sure you gave to all the devotees of a great cause: better race relations in the South and nation.

GORDON B. HANCOCK
Richmond, Virginia

From on High

To the Editor:—. . . And speaking of authors I would like to see his or her name immediately beneath the title of the contribution. A short biography of each would be interesting to most readers, I believe. We like to think the writer is a human being like you or I, and not some highbrow writing from a point of great height. . . .

CHARLES S. WHITE, M.D.
Washington

Lighter

To the Editor:—. . . It would also be beneficial if you relaxed your style at times and did not take everything so damned seriously. I know the items you cover are indeed serious, but a full issue on the same key is not conducive to continuous attention, and I admit that it was with some labor that I have read your first four issues. . . .

MARK E. STROOCK
Hartsdale, New York

Vigilantes in Arkansas

To the Editor:—I am not familiar with the aims and objectives of your magazine, but if your attitude toward Senator Fulbright and toward Arkansas reflects the editorial policy of *The Reporter,* it is certainly one of bias and not of objectivity.

I, for one, am unable to see any justification whatsoever for such phrases as "scrawny grain-and-lumber back-country," "bayou bourbons," etc. To say that Senator Fulbright was elected by a "dominant group" or is answerable, as you imply, to a ruling clique here in Arkansas is simply a falsehood. Senator Fulbright was elected as a result of a hard-fought campaign in which he was opposed by Colonel T. H. Barton, Chairman of the Board, Lion Oil Company, El Dorado, by former Governor Homer Adkins, and by former Senator Hattie W. Caraway. In that campaign political sympathies were widely distributed, and to imply that any special group elected Senator Fulbright is absurd.

I could point out a number of incorrect statements which are contained in this article, but it would be tiresome. The Negro population of Arkansas constitutes less than 25 per cent—not 33⅓ per cent. This state has probably less anti-Negro prejudice in it than any of the other Southern states. We were the first among Southern states to enroll Negroes as students in our state university. You say that to Senator Fulbright the Negro problem is an irreducible one. Senator Fulbright's record demonstrates to any intelligent person that that statement cannot be supported.

In another place you state that in the 1940's Arkansas was the scene of anti-labor activities by backwoods vigilante groups. You do not specify such activities. I do not believe you can. . . .

FRANK CANTRELL
Little Rock, Arkansas

Mr. Cantrell is right about the Negro population of Arkansas. According to the 1940 census there were 482,578 Negroes out of a total state population of 1,949,387. The reference to vigilante groups was based on an interview with a newspaper man from the area and on the following excerpt from Inside U.S.A., *by John Gunther: "Anti-labor sentiment in Arkansas is vehement and extreme. As far back as 1944 the state voted on a constitutional amendment to forbid the closed shop; recently a Veterans Industrial Association was set up, with scarcely concealed vigilante aims."*

Three Sneers

To the Editor:—Your contributor, Robert Lasch, pulls no punches in describing Sewell Avery of Montgomery Ward, and only in the very last sentence of his article does he give the tycoon of the mail-order business the slightest break. That closing sentence reads: "Avery probably prefers to remember the time during his struggle with 'that man,' when he walked into the dining room of a Chicago club and every member rose in tribute."

Actually, far from being a testimonial to Sewell Avery, the incident described is a condemnation of the morals of Chicago clubmen. . . .

ARTHUR MULCAHY
Philadelphia

Dear Reader:

There are questions on which everyone must stand up and be counted, decisions of right and wrong, justice and injustice. In such areas, *The Reporter's* position is never uncertain, never equivocal. But there are questions on which men of good faith can hold widely different and even contradictory views. Such matters are often technical. The problem of the relationship that should bind city, farm, and government in national prosperity is a technical problem. That is why, discussing it in this issue, *The Reporter* deliberately published J. K. Galbraith arguing for the Brannan Bill and A. Whitney Griswold who is not satisfied with it. We built this issue on the facts and on various interpretations of the facts—because the debate is a technical one and legitimately open. In such a field we do not insist upon our opinion; we provide data and standards from which a reasoned opinion may be formed.

The Editors

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